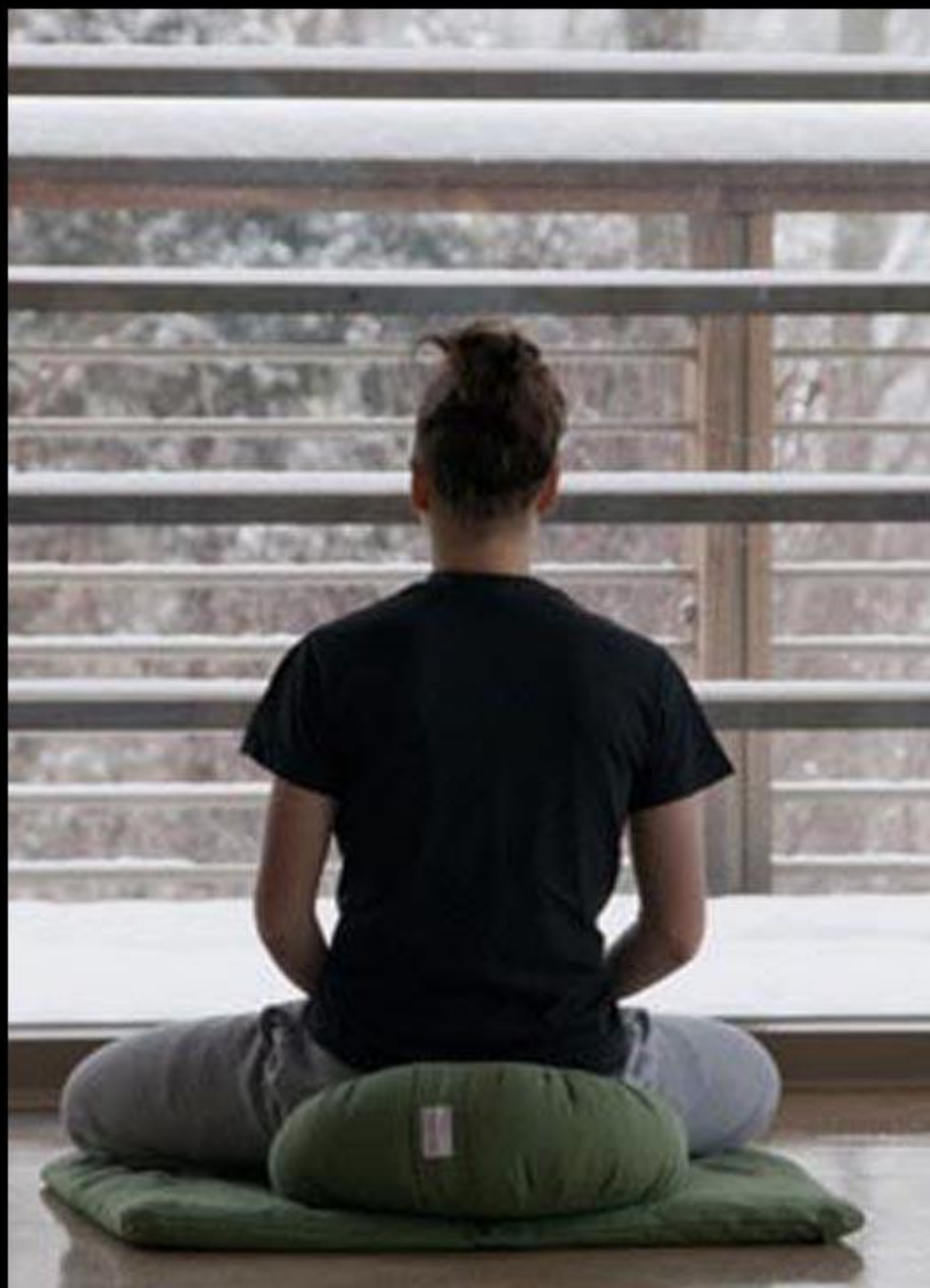


Philippe L. De Coster, B.TH, DD



**Modern Psychology
and Practical Meditation**

© March 2017 – Satsang EBook Publications, Ghent, Belgium
(Non-commercial – Free download)
Copyright: Philippe L. De Coster

Modern Psychology and Practical Meditation

The human brain has been called the most complex object in the known universe, and in many ways it's the final frontier of science. A hundred billion neurons, close to a quadrillion connections between them, and we don't even fully understand a single cell.

Neuroscience aims to understand how a person arises out of a clump of squishy matter. It's where psychology meets biology. And with new tools at our disposal—computer simulations, medical imaging—we double our knowledge every decade. Roll up your sleeves and poke around.

Our brain is the most complex machine that ever existed. With over 7.146 billion models it is also the most ubiquitous. Despite this, we are unsure of its complexity. We still do not yet understand how it works. By defining the functionality of certain areas of the brain, and by understanding some of the mechanics at the neural chemical level, we still remain ignorant of how the brain coordinates all of its activities and develops language, thought and a sense of self.

This three point three-pound wet mass—greyish on the outside, and whitish pink on the inside—controls every single thing you will ever do. Ever. Each one of us needs these complex structures because each one of us needs it to reflect the totality of the world we live in and how we function within it. Our brain constructs a representation of the world and how we function within it. Other animals do this as well, but what is important in their world is different from what our brain determines is important for us.

In the past we took a different attitude to studying the brain. Most of the scientific writing on the brain was focused on establishing the superiority of human intelligence. But there is not one single factor that we can apply to distinguish our brains from those of other animals. We cannot just use size, because some mammals (e.g. whales) have bigger brains. Perhaps it is the size of the brain in proportion to the body. When we try that by measuring the Encephalization Quotient (EQ) ratio, small birds beat us. Perhaps it is size, EQ and something else. The correct question is to ask what aspects of the world are we, as humans, trying to represent in our brain? And how complex is the brain really?

In 2009, the Brazilian scientist Suzana Herculano-Houzel performed a review of what we know about the physical structure of the brain. The adult human

male brain has 86 billion neurons--more than any other primate. Each neuron has between 1,000 to 10,000 synapses that result in 125 trillion synapses in the cerebral cortex alone. That is at least 1,000 times the number of stars in our galaxy. Stephen Smith from Stanford University reported that one synapse might contain some 1,000 molecular-scale switches. That is over 125,000 trillion switches in a single human brain.

With such a lean mean machine then it is surprising to learn that the brain is obese. It is 60 percent fat, with over 25 percent of that being cholesterol. Cholesterol is in every cell in our body and becomes concentrated in our brain. Most of the cholesterol in the brain is produced in the hypothalamus itself, establishing cholesterol as an integral part of our brain. Cholesterol is used by a specific type of glial cells in the brain to form myelination—sheathing which enhances neuron speed and integrity of signal. Glial cells outnumber neurons ten times over with 860 billion cells. It was only in 2010 that glial cells were found to assist neurons in forming synaptic connections between each other. Once thought to be simply support cells, cleaning up and helping with myelination, they are now known to also promote dendrite growth, and to be as important as neurons in forming the neural network that make up cognitive activity. Glial cells can also reproduce—if neurons reproduce they do it slower—and similarly release transmitters and control neural activity just like neurons. All of this activity is monitored by microglia cells that not only clean up damaged cells but they also prune dendrites, forming part of the learning process.

Comparing mapping the brain to mapping the human genome is like comparing the artistry of the Mona Lisa to Sponge Bath Bob. The total length of the human genome is 3 billion base pairs, the brain has nearly 30 times more neurons. And whereas the genome base pairs has an on and off arrangement, each neuron might have a thousand switches. Mapping the brain will mean that if every switch in every synaptic end at every neuron is identified by a second of time then it will take 4,000,000,000 years to complete. The brain is that complex.

In the cortex alone, there are 100,000 miles of myelin-covered—insulated—nerve fibres. Each nerve leaves the base of the brain to the outer reaches of our skin, we have a neural network that is incomparable. We have millions of nerve endings in the outermost layer of our body that sense minute variations of light, sounds, vibrations, touch, smell, pressure, temperature; all extremely sensitive in most cases more sensitive than any computer on earth. The marvel of the brain is not just the capacity but the sensitivity to stimuli. The Human Protein Atlas identifies some 318 proteins that are involved in all these

activities.

There is a galaxy of neural networks active in our bodies designed to get information from the outside. All this information is travelling from the outer reaches of the body to the brain, sometimes at speeds of 268 miles per hour. The brain is structured in such a way that information is processed both linear and parallel. And here is the beauty of the brain. It creates a kind of a dance, it orchestrates the flow of information in a way that we still do not fully understand.

We filter out most of the sensory information. Information travelling from our peripheral senses to the brain, making a vibrating, electrical symphony. Constantly on and constantly playing and the brain makes music from trillions of individual notes every second throughout our lives. And the musical composition has to do with the world outside and how it affects us. The brain teaches the body to survive. We represent the dynamics of the outside world inside our brain. There we can predict and therefore control the outcome. This is learning. Through learning and some innate ability we identify what is important and what is not so important. That “so” is crucial. Information has differing levels of importance, and also different times when we are more prone to learn than at other times.

Our brain is an organic reflection of the environment that we face day-in-day-out. Our conscious attention is drawn to specific aspects of all sensory information monitored by the brain. We are monitoring many other peripheral events at a subconscious level. The more we learn the less we need the brain, unless we challenge it all the time. That constant state of unease, that novelty, is what keeps the brain functioning as it is meant to function. Once it can predict then it no longer needs to learn new things.

All of this complexity allows the brain to continuously receive feedback from the outside to modify its construct of the world and then to determine what is important for us. Its aim is to be able to predict the environment we live in and to do that it has developed one of the most complex structures known to humans. By mapping the brain we will be holding a mirror to another mirror.

Understanding the Unconscious Mind briefly

The unconscious is where most of the work of the mind gets done; it's the repository of automatic skills, the source of intuition and dreams, and an engine of information processing. Fleeting perceptions may register in the unconscious

mind long before are aware of them.

The unconscious mind is not some black hole of unacceptable impulses waiting to trip you up, but it can be the source of hidden beliefs, fears, and attitudes that interfere with everyday life. Most forms of psychotherapy aim to bring into conscious awareness many of these hidden hindrances, so that we can examine them and choose how to deal with them.

People have been meditating for thousands of years. While the practice isn't new, science is just catching up to its benefits. With the growing research activity in this area and studies investigating the effects and benefits of meditation practice as well as the processes that lead to these effects, it is becoming increasingly important to explain these findings in an understandable way. We also aim to provide a resource for students and researchers alike, who are looking for reliable information on the topic of meditation research.

We thus aim to present findings from today's scientific research into meditation and mindfulness practice and also provide an overview of our own research activities as taught in psychosynthesis taught by Dr. Roberto Assagioli, MD; Michal Eastcott and Nancy Magor, Sundial House, Nevill Court, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, UK. The two Meditation Groups for the New Age, and Creative Meditation are no longer there in 2017 since Michal's death, but this was the unique and most radiant place.

Fully standing in the twenty-first century there appears to be a general improvement in the standard of living in terms of material comforts all over the world. People in general tend to be seized by the development of new technologies, capitalism even, consumerism, and globalisation. . Individualistic tendencies seem to be replacing collectivism, in any cultures around the world. At the same time new challenges in moral, social, economic, ecological and political spheres have greatly emerged, while religions forcibly decrease being replaced by scientific thinking and sound morality. These developments have also altered the traditional life styles and values. The level of stress and tension experienced by individuals in a changing ethos has increased and people have been looking for ways of coping with them. Value crisis is perceptible in just noticeable differences at global level as manifested in international conflicts, and in racial and communal hatred leading to increased terrorism, aggression and violence all over the world.

In this emerging scenario of conflict, stress and tension, experts in all fields are looking for new ways of managing the crisis. Social scientists and even some of

the physical and natural scientists have also looked into ancient metaphysical traditions to seek solace and solutions for modern problems. The crux of the point is not altering the external conditions, but bringing change within self and in one's perspective. It is in this global context that metaphysical traditions of the east have gained worldwide significance and acceptance as ways of bringing about the change in perspective and as harbinger of peace. Contemporary psychology of meditation is a socio-cultural response to changing worldview and ethos across the globe, which is taking place alongside the rapid strides in science and technology. It is an attempt at developing "I-thou" in contrast to "I-it" attitude in interpersonal relationship, in the words of Martin Beuber the famous French philosopher. Meditation is also a way of engaging the environment, called "man-in-nature" in contrast to "man-over-nature" by anthropologists.

How meditation affects the brain

Humans have meditated for thousands of years we know, for religious purposes or just to quiet the mind. There are many meditation techniques but for the most part they can be lumped into two broad categories: non directive (mind wanders freely) and concentrative (suppresses random thoughts). Any differences in how the body responds to each type have not been well known prior to this modern and scientific times. A new study led by Svend Davanger from the University of Oslo has investigated what happens in the brain during meditation versus casual resting. The results were published in an open access format in the journal *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*.

The study used fourteen participants who were experienced meditators and they underwent functional MRI (fMRI) to measure brain activity during three different states: nondirective meditation, which allows fleeting thoughts provided the mantra is repeated; open monitoring, which allows the person to experience whatever random thoughts come into their head; and focused attention, in which the person deliberately tries to prevent random thoughts and focuses solely on their breathing.

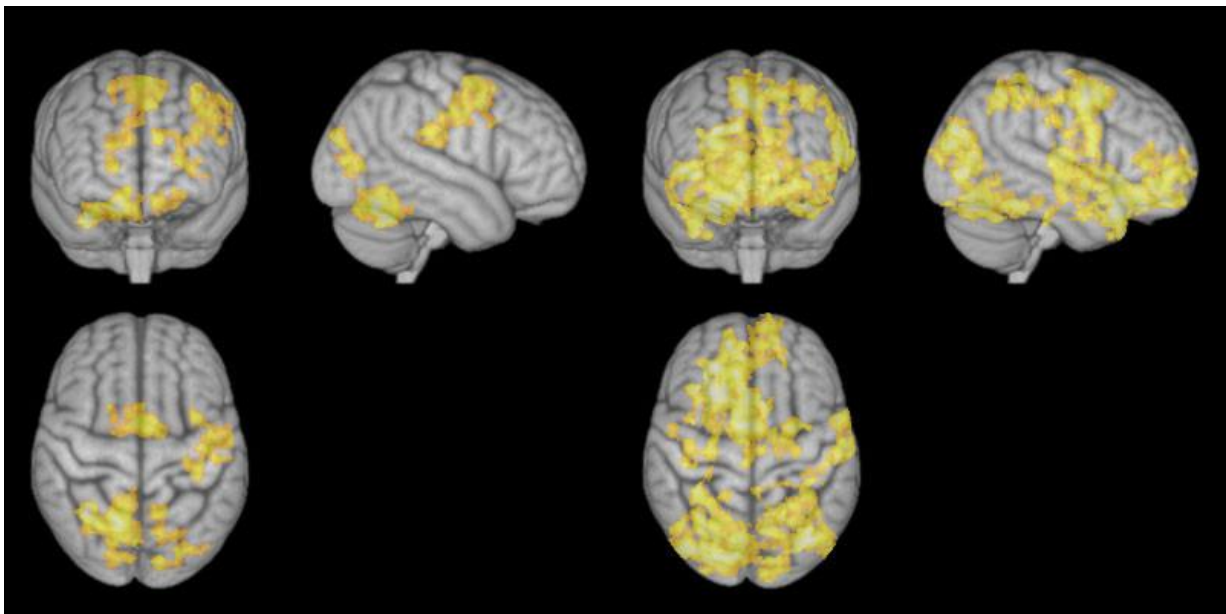
The ability to reduce the number of times the mind wanders during focused attention exercise has been heralded as a benefit of long-term experience with meditation. That assertion typically comes from those who self-report the amount of time they are on task, and not from studies that have actually tracked the amount of time the person meditating is able to focus thoughts. This study found that when the participants were asked to push a button and track when they were no longer thinking about their breath, the more experienced meditators didn't really have much of an advantage over those that were newer to it. During the twenty minutes it took to complete the fMRI, the participants pressed their buttons about once every 80 seconds.

The results found that activity was significantly increased in the areas of the brain associated with emotions and memories during the non-directive meditation, compared to the focused meditation. This was an unexpected result, as it was assumed that actively concentrating would have increased brain activity.

"Teachers were surprised that the activity of the brain was greatest when the person's thoughts wandered freely on their own, rather than when the brain worked to be more strongly focused," said lead author Jian Xu in a press release.

"When the subjects stopped doing a specific task and were not really doing anything special, there was an increase in activity in the area of the brain where we process thoughts and feelings. It is described as a kind of resting network. And it was this area that was most active during nondirective meditation."

"Meditation is an activity that is practiced by millions of people. It is important that we find out how this really works." "In recent years there has been a sharp increase in international research on meditation. Several universities in the US spend a great deal of money to research in the field. So I think it is important that we are also active."



The left images show the brain during concentrative meditation, while images to the right show the brain during nondirective meditation. Credit: Norwegian University of Science and Technology

Meditation belongs to Psychology not Religion

Ornstein (1972) observes that meditation refers to a set of techniques, which are the products of a different type of psychology that aims at personal rather than intellectual knowledge. According to him meditation exercises are designed to produce an alteration in consciousness, which means a shift away from an active, outward-oriented, linear mode towards receptive and quiescent mode with a shift from external focus of attention to an internal one. These exercises constitute a deliberate attempt to separate oneself for a short while from the flow of daily life, and to “turn off” the active mode of normal consciousness so that one may enter a complementary mode. This process involves inhibiting the usual mode of consciousness in order to cultivate a second mode that is available to man. The basic understanding underlying meditative exercises is that our ordinary consciousness is a personal construction and that it can be extended to a new mode of operation.

Deikman (1971) has listed several characteristics of the action and the receptive modes of consciousness. Most importantly as a psychological state the action mode is a state of striving whose functional orientation is achieving personal goals, from nutrition to defence to obtaining social rewards, a variety of symbols and sensual pleasures and avoidance of pain. This involves manipulation of the environment. The psychological manifestations of action mode include focal attention, object-based logic, heightened boundary perception, dominance of formal over sensory characteristics and predominance of shapes and meanings. The time orientation of this mode is future. The physiological correlates of this mode are dominance of striate muscle system, sympathetic nervous system, b-waves on EEG and increased muscle tension.

In contrast, the receptive mode is a psychological state of non-striving whose functional orientation is to “be” in the here and now without any personal goals to achieve of material or social nature, which leads to maximization of intake of the environment. The psychological manifestations of this mode are diffuse attention, Para logical thought, decreased boundary perception, dominance of sensory over formal characteristics of objects or events, and dominance of colour and texture. Physiological correlates are dominance of sensory-perceptual system, parasympathetic system, a-waves on EEG and decreased muscle tension. Meditation as exercises to facilitate receptive mode means many things according to Lama Govinda. It means turning inward; quiet observation, reflection and awareness of ourselves; to be conscious of consciousness; to become a detached observer of the stream of changing thoughts, feelings, drives and visions, until their nature and origin are recognized (Govinda, 1978).

Walsh (1983) understands the original goals and purposes of meditation within the context of consciousness, as development of certain qualities like calmness,

equanimity, concentration, compassion, wisdom, generosity, and perceptual and introspective sensitivity; and of alternative states of consciousness.

Shapiro (1985) notes that the original purpose of meditation as delineated in the philosophical and cultural context of the techniques, is to create a deeper sensitivity to perceptual and cognitive stimuli and to bring about a change in a person's awareness and reaction to oneself, others and the world around.

Meditation in Modern Psychology

In today's psychological literature meditation is used as a broad and generic term to include all those different connotations of yoga as a mental discipline and of dhyana and upasana. Second, the term also refers to all these ancient spiritual practices prevalent in other traditions like Buddhism, Christianity, Jewish Kabbalah, Taoism, etc. Third, it is used to refer to many other mental devices or techniques developed by researchers, for example, Clinically Standardised Meditation (Carrington, 1987). Sitting quietly, relaxing, closing the eyes, breathing deliberately, focusing attention on an object or image non-analytically, observing the thought process without judging, repeating sounds mentally, rhythmic moving of the body as in Sufi dervish dance, and so on are all considered as meditation. As Carrington (1987) notes the term is used as a "conglomerate word" and under this conceptual umbrella a number of "different techniques and intents" are grouped. According to Shapiro (1982) meditation refers to "a family of techniques which have in common a conscious attempt to focus attention in a non-analytical way and an attempt not to dwell on discursive, ruminating thought".

Naranjo and Ornstein (1971) categorise all the different meditative practices into three types viz., the way of forms (concentration, absorption, union, outer directed, Apollonian), the expressive way (freedom, transparency, surrender, inner directed, Dionysian) and the negative way (elimination, detachment, emptiness, centred, the "middle way"). Goleman (1977) groups them into two types viz., "concentration" and "opening up" meditation. Carrington (1987) distinguishes "centring" techniques from "meditation". In Patanjali's Yoga Sutra centring techniques are known as *dharana* and meditation is known as *dhyana*. To get a better idea of the difference between concentration and meditation and also to know about meditative practices in the Indian tradition one can refer to Bhajananda.

Carrington (1987) distinguishes between "practical" and "spiritual" meditation. Spiritual meditation is historic, embedded in centuries-old religious traditions. Practical form of meditation is contemporary and frequently practised in the west. The objective of spiritual meditation as believed in the various world religions, is to attain spiritual development, through a process of deepening the

range of the human spirit and changing the entire life of a human being. Practical meditation affects the practitioner's life in certain practical ways, without changing their lives in an essential fashion. The objective of practical meditation is to enrich the experience of the average Westerner who continues to function within the framework of ordinary society. Most contemporary researches and the propagation of meditation have focused on practical meditation. From the practical angle meditation is a cost-effective way of stress management and yoga is viewed not as a way of life but as a relaxation strategy. However, present situation calls for not just stress management but a fundamental re-vision of our outlook towards life and reality and meditation can bring about this change in us if rightly understood.

Application and objectives of practical meditation

Meditation has varied applications, its scope ranging from simple relaxation to Self-realization. Broadly one can speak of five of them: behavioural, clinical, epistemological, psychological, and socio-cultural. Behavioural refers to the enhancement of efficiency in terms of focal attention, present-centredness, skill in action, and decision making. Clinical applications include heightening of awareness of physiological and psychological processes leading to their voluntary control and inducing psychobiological and psychotherapeutic effects. Epistemological application refers to the acquisition of knowledge of self and reality through a process of transcendence, in which meditation serves as “experiential way” as contrasted with “empirical way”. Psychological application enables effecting changes in different aspects of mental functioning and personality, personal growth and self-actualization and inducing changes in interpersonal and social behaviour. Socio-cultural application of meditation as already mentioned is a response to different types of crisis viz., economic, energy, ecological, demographic and humanistic world over, and it involves fostering a sense of belongingness and oneness of humanity and oneness with cosmos, through a shift in perspective.

Today and contemporary meditation research

With the introduction of Transcendental Meditation, by Maharshi Mahesha Yogi in early 1960s in Western culture researchers from many disciplines, primarily from physiology and psychology, have investigated the phenomenon of meditation. Many investigators have documented its practical utility for psychosomatic and psychological problems (Murphy & Donovan, 1997; Shapiro & Walsh, 1984; Walsh, 1999; West, 1987).

In psychological jargon, meditation techniques are “self-regulation strategies” (Shapiro & Giber, 1978). Self-regulation strategy primarily refers to the ways and means of controlling and directing the activity of a system by itself, which

are built-in. At physiological level, self-regulation through meditation reduces the activity of the sympathetic nervous system that is crucial in causing stress and tension. It increases the dominance of the para-sympathetic nervous system activity, which enhances relaxation. Jacobson's progressive muscular relaxation, biofeedback, autogenic training are some of the techniques which are of self-regulation. To this list is added the ancient Indian techniques like *asana* (posture) and *pranayama* (regulation of prana through breathing). Meditative practices which involve sitting and chanting mantra, focusing on breathing, being passively aware of thought processes are also considered as self-regulation strategies which act at the mental level. Many studies have been conducted on them and the relative efficacy of these techniques have been discussed and debated (Holmes, 1984; Shapiro, 1982; Woolfolk, 1975).

Another important focus of research on meditation is to examine its psychotherapeutic and growth benefits (Ali et al., 1988; Bogart, 1990). Investigators have found that meditative practices enhance psychological growth and well-being. They also serve as therapeutic adjuncts both in re-educative and re-constructive therapies, besides serving as a supportive therapy technique.

Study of meditative practices as altered states of consciousness (Shapiro & Giber, 1978) primarily focussed on distinguishing states induced by meditation practices from clinical conditions and other techniques of altering consciousness (Barber, 1970; Kiran Kumar, 1981; Shapiro, 1980). Attempts to portray the phenomenology of meditative states (Brown, 1977; Goleman, 1977; Kornfield, 1979; Walsh, 1977, 1978) and to understand the underlying dimensions (Osis, Bokert, & Carlson, 1973) were made.

Understanding meditation as an integral aspect of spiritual traditions, but again in the background of modern psychological perspectives can be found in Brown, Engler & Wilber (1986), Naranjo & Ornstein (1971), Ornstein (1972), Tart (1975a, 1989), Walsh (1980a, 1999), and West (1986).

Thus, from the viewpoint of modern psychology, investigations on yoga and other meditative practices are of significance in enhancing the understanding of the body-mind relationship. For comprehensive overviews and reviews of studies on meditation, one can refer to Johnson (1982), Rao (1989), Vigne (1997), and Walsh (1980, 1999). They have also helped in redefining the boundaries of the discipline to include hitherto neglected human phenomena viz., consciousness, as a valid subject matter.

Contextual approach to meditation

Thus we have two main perspectives on meditation. One that views meditation from the point of view of modern psychology and the other which attempts to understand meditation as a product of a different type of psychology. The

former views meditation primarily as a self-regulation strategy, an adjunct to psychotherapy and as a technique of altering consciousness. The latter, though acknowledges all these goes beyond towards the “farther reaches of human nature”(Abraham Maslow) with emphasis on “meta needs” and “being-values”. Most contemporary approaches to the study of meditation view meditation primarily as a technique from the perspective of modern psychology and a number of factors traditionally associated with meditation practices are regarded as secondary. However, careful examination of meditative phenomena reveals that these so-called secondary factors are as much important as the technique proper. Further, most teaching of meditation takes place in spiritually oriented centres, which bring in their unique assumptions and beliefs to provide a context whether one likes it or not.

The contextual approach holds that whether one approaches meditation from a modern psychological point of view or from the traditional point of view, there are many factors that provide an interactive context within which the technique one employs operate to produce certain phenomena. Thus, it is possible to understand all that is discussed in contemporary and traditional literature about meditation with reference to three broad conceptual categories, or factors in the statistical sense. They are **nature** (Category I), **influencing factors** (Category II) and **effects** (Category III). Each category has certain properties and these properties can have dimensions. All of them interact leading to meditative phenomena of different kinds. The word category is used here because the model is derived from a qualitative approach to data analysis based on Grounded Theory Technique of Sarbin & Cross (1990). For more details regarding the development of the model refer author’s book **Psychology of Meditation: A contextual approach** (Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2002).

Category I Nature	Category II Influencing factors	Category III Effects*
Properties	Properties	Properties
(a) Perceptions (b) Practice (c) Process	(a) Goals (b) Belief system (c) Culture and society (d) Faith community (e) Personality traits (f)Facilitative factors (g) Disturbing factors	(a) Stress relief (b) Attitudinal change (c) Dependency

*Note: Effects listed under properties do not exhaust all possibilities. It is dependent on the limited data variety.

The different definitions of meditation currently available in scientific literature seem to focus on different categories. For example, Goleman's (1977) distinction between "concentration" and "opening up" meditation defined in terms of attention strategies, emphasise on the nature of meditation (Category I). Much discussion has taken place about the relation between the procedure one adopts and the experiences one undergoes during meditation (Goleman, 1977; Naranjo & Ornstein, 1971). Similarly, Carrington's (1977) distinction between "spiritual meditation" and "practical meditation", and Johnson's (1982) distinction between "intrinsic" and "extrinsic " goals are definitions which emphasise the influencing factors goals and belief system (Category II). Defining meditation as a means of inducing altered states of consciousness or as a self-regulation strategy (Shapiro & Giber, 1978), as relaxation response (Benson, 1975) are examples of Category III related to effects. One can suggest that the three categories represent a *three-category/factor model* of meditation. The various properties of the three categories interact with each other resulting in a variety of meditative experiences. Hence it is appropriate to treat it as a *multivariate phenomenon*.

The model holds that the understanding of the phenomenon of meditation depend on the *meditator*, or the *person*, as a *context*. Current approaches to understand meditation which are primarily technique or goal centred appear inadequate. Further, it is understood from this model that the process of meditation is dynamic. That means as the meditator undergoes changes in one's belief system, values, expectations, and perceptions one's meditation practice changes. Hence, the phenomenon of meditation has to be approached as a *dynamic process*, but not as a static incident or event. From the methodological point of view it appears more advantageous to follow some variations of the *participant observation* method, rather than a strict experimental approach. Longitudinal and cross -cultural studies will bring out more information on the dynamic phenomenon of meditation than any single culture, cross-sectional studies.

In the next section on practice, the three categories of are elaborated with a view to familiarize the readers as to how the various properties in each category may influence each other in the learning and actual day-to-day practice of meditation.

Practice - Category I – Nature

Perceptions about Meditation

The technique of meditation one uses and the process involved constitute what is usually called meditation. However, participants carry their own perceptions and expectations of meditation. For example, following are some of the perceptions about meditation reported by the participants in a study.

It is a form of prayer; concentration on God; that which enables me to see what matters each moment and not concern myself with things that do not matter; a passive process; a way of integrating all these active techniques, like visualisation, relaxation, biofeedback; I didn't think normal people could do meditation. The above excerpts illustrate how people view meditation in their own unique way, which may affect their practices, experience and outcome. While some of them represent what West (1986) has called “common essence” of meditation, others are “biases” as Tart and Young (1989) have noted. How such ‘perceptions’ influence the practice in one way or the other will be evident below.

Practice of Meditation

Practice refers to what a meditator actually does during a period of twenty, thirty or sixty minutes. He or she may follow one of the techniques like active focusing of attention on an object or thought or be passively aware. While doing that what one perceives and believes as important component of practice influences what one does. Here is an example.

A participant reported:

I practice it with some religious practice. I pray in the beginning and then I meditate with “mantra” rather than just breathing and saying Om. Om is of course a mantra, but I begin with Gayathri and then Om and then silent Om...you didn't mention anything about mantra...It is my feeling that mantra brings better results than just doing breathing practice.

Another example.

I do pranayama and...then I just sit quietly and tell my mind to stop. Primarily that's what I do. Stillness, stopping the thinking.

There are individual differences in what type of practice suits a person. One participant reported thus.

I don't like focusing on my breathing. It doesn't work for me. If I focus on it, it skips through...if I forget about it and then focus on my affirmation and then I become aware of my breathing that works. But I don't find it is necessary for me to think about my breathing. It is not for me right now. Eventually I may get more into my breathing. Right now, I need to do it to kind of keep myself. I need to get a foundation, I need to feel safe, to feel peaceful, before I get to that level of breathing.

Generally, it is believed that participants of a meditation course adhere strictly to the specified type of meditation taught. However, it can be a source of error as

far as a researcher is concerned because of the factor of individual differences. Meditators may bring in their own variations into what they do.

Process of meditation

The process here refers to what actually happens during a meditation session. An example of process is as follows:

The usual is get into breathing as I begin with pranayama. The rhythm of the breathing settles the body down...and the body is enlivened by the prana as you feel it begins to reach into different parts of the body. Then the consciousness becomes clear and focused...sometimes my attention is wide outside of my body. Not in my body at all. Often I struggle between being without thought and breathing. And breathing always activates the thought or often activates it and so I go back and forth between being able to be without thoughts, just clear attention and having that attention distracted by the movement of the breath. There are times when I am free from that and my attention is completely free from any activity of the body. That attention is very energetic...like a beam or sword or some piercing thing.

Phenomenology of meditative process varies considerably from one meditator to another. West (1986) has pointed out that, it is the uniqueness rather than the commonality of meditation experience that seems most significant in the lives of meditators. He also notes that the researchers have often viewed meditators as a homogenous group and, this tendency has obscured the large and real differences in meditators' experiences.

Meditation cannot be described in a simplistic way. It cannot also be understood in an either/or manner and therefore, questions like whether meditation is a state or a technique, and whether meditation refers to a particular practice or to a whole set of practices may not be answered categorically. West (1986) has attempted to understand the "meditation career histories" of a number of subjects in terms of different conceptual continua. He notes that meditators practice varied on "unimodal versus multimodal" continuum, with many long-term meditators having experience of a rich mixture of methods.

Category II - Influencing factors

The perceptions, practice and process are conditioned by many variables, which are referred here as influencing factors, which provide a larger psychosocial and/or spiritual, psychic, mental context for the practitioner. They are (a) Goals (b) Belief system (c) Culture and Society (d) Faith community (e) Personality traits (f) Facilitative factors and (g) Disturbing factors. Each one of them has certain properties and dimensions.

Goals

Goals involve three properties viz., expectations about meditation, motivation to begin meditation and adherence, i.e., whether one wants to practice as a way of life or as a means to end. Out of these expectations play a significant role. Expectations may be physical, psychological, spiritual or mental (brain work). Physical includes relieving stress, gaining more energy, and overcoming illness. Psychological includes resolving emotional conflicts, resolving identity problems, experiencing calmness, and experiencing awareness. Spiritual (not religious) includes God-realisation (I am the Power, I am the Glory, I am another God) and Self-realisation. These expectations to certain extent limit the scope and depth of one's experiences. Motivations to join a course and adhering to a routine depend to some extent on expectations.

Belief system

Belief system has two aspects viz., personal and cultural. Personal belief system refers to the belief system of an individual, as distinguished from ethno epistemology, which refers to the cultural belief system. Ethno epistemology refers to the world-view, values, beliefs in a culture about man and the universe, which are built into thought ways and life ways of people as integral aspects and God-Spot in the brain. One of the important aspects of personal belief system that has implication for meditation is whether one believes in a transcendental dimension or not. If one believes in it then one is likely to have a positive valence towards spiritual goals, whereas one who does not believe tend to have only physical and psychological expectations about meditation.

Since ethno epistemology of a culture contributes to the development of the personal belief system, it tends to play a significant role in meditation practice. There are definite cultural differences between Asian and Western countries regarding the worldview. Asian cultures hold man is spiritual and believe in transcendental dimension, whereas many Western nations do not. For example, in India place of spirituality is high in the hierarchy of values, social acceptance of meditative practices is positive, environment is supportive, faith associated is more, availability of opportunities to learn meditation is more and availability of information and models is much as compared to a western society.

Faith or religious community

Faith or religious community is a group of persons who share certain assumptions, beliefs and views. A group of people who always would like to be identified as scientists can also be regarded as a faith community, as much as one speaks of a religious group as faith community.

Particular religious or faith community plays an important role in meditation practice and experience, but should not be necessarily religious. Religious and spiritual traditions provide the necessary structure and discipline required for meditative life, but is outdated. Each religion/spiritual tradition has its own conceptions of spiritual and religious experiences that provide the conceptual framework. The properties relevant to this are liturgical, interactional, and environmental. Liturgical includes rituals conducted, chanting of hymns, singing devotional songs. Interactional properties include verbal, non-verbal, and “experiential” interactions between the teacher and the taught, verbal, non-verbal, and “experiential” interaction between the group members, sharing of personal experiences, and group meditation. Environmental property includes physical surroundings; serenity and quietness of atmosphere, and holiness attached to the place.

A group of people who may not believe in religion and spirituality, but would like to pursue meditation within the framework of modern psychology, or a psychology derived from spiritual tradition may form a faith community of their own with unique properties. An illustration of this with reference to Integral Psychology developed from Sri Aurobindo’s teachings can be found in Kiran Kumar (2001).

Personality traits

Personality traits also play a significant role in meditation. It is well known in the Indian tradition that *sattva guna* facilitates meditative life better as compared to *rajo guna* and *tamo guna*. A *sattvic* person is described as one who has discriminative intellect; who is self-controlled, serene, equanimous, and steadfast; who is virtuous, generous and gentle; and who is detached and duty bound without expectations, a seeker of self and aware of the unity underlying all diversities. A *rajasic* person is one who is driven into action by passion, is restless, is struggling; who has more desires, strong likes and dislikes, and pursues sensory pleasures; who is attached to one’s social roles; who lacks clear discrimination and has distorted understanding; and who is egotistic. A *tamasic* person is depressed, lethargic, disinclined to work, negligent, undisciplined, arrogant, hostile, indecisive, ignorant, inadvertent, uncertain and dull (Uma, 1969). It is to be noted that all the three *gunas* are present in all the individuals and it is the preponderance of one over the other which leads to the labelling of persons as *sattvic*, *rajasic* and *tamasic* type. According to Indian psychological perspectives, regular practice of meditation will lead to reduction in *rajasic* and *tamasic* qualities and increase of *sattvic* qualities.

Further, the way of life we prefer to live also matters. Whether one prefers ways of life, which emphasise solitude, withdrawal, contemplation, and meditation or those that emphasize an active, participating, and social existence determines

one's expectations about meditation. However, it is possible that over a period of practice preferences for ways of life may change due to a shift in one's perspective about the nature of life and reality.

Facilitative factors

After one begins meditating there are facilitative and disturbing factors that are internal and external. Internal facilitative factors include relaxed state, constant practice and persistence, value attached to the goal and practice, and enjoying one's work and feeling satisfaction in it. External facilitative factors include quiet and peaceful atmosphere, lack of problems in family and work and few external demands.

It is widely known that meditation leads to a relaxed state of body and mind. Then, under which condition can one consider what is widely believed as an effect of meditation is itself a facilitative property? One participant who used to attend the classes always in a state of tension later reported as follows: *I can't seem to focus on breathing unless I feel safe or calm already.* Continuous anxiety and tension prevented this participant from following the meditation practice and she subsequently learnt "affirmations" like "*I feel safe*", "*I feel calm*", etc., from another yoga teacher. The "affirmations" worked as autosuggestion and relaxed her. The experience of this participant shows that intense feelings of insecurity and anxiety may actually prevent one from practising meditation, just as they would affect any other routine.

Disturbing factors

Internal disturbing factors include worry, conflicts, tensions, tiredness, lack of discipline, and one's attitude towards meditation. The external factors include travel, work schedules, family commitment, physical environment, and problems in work and sporadic life style.

It is interesting to note that for another participant meditation practice itself came in the way as a disturbing factor because her attitude towards her practice was very rigid. As she reported she took her practice very seriously and started "judging" her meditation practice. Her attitude, *I think I never do it right*, was nagging her leading to frustration.

Category III - Effects of meditation

The effects of meditation practice can be many and varied. As discussed already with examples, the perceptions and expectations about meditation influence the effects of meditation considerably. Similarly, other influencing properties discussed also determine the effects of meditation practice. Therefore, in assessing the outcome of one's practice one needs to keep in mind all the relevant variables which are simultaneously operating. It is important for a

regular meditator to evaluate the many influencing factors that may be operating in course of one's life, thus shaping one's practice, experience and effects.

One possible effect of meditation that requires special mention is "dependency" one may develop on meditation. Dependency on meditation is a phenomenon many investigators have not looked into. Tart and Young (1989) have discussed this issue with reference to the attachment and addiction one may develop to a guru and/or drugs consumed as an aid to practice. Young notes that more often people develop needs with respect to the conditions they require to meditate, (i.e., facilitative properties discussed above), rather than around meditation itself. Two participants did report dependency on meditation. They described what they feel if they cannot spend time for meditation regularly. Their experiences indicate different degrees of psychological dependency and one could say that it varies on a dimension from low to high.

One participant was able to differentiate between "compulsion" and "discomfort" when she does not practice meditation regularly. Her experience reported below will indicate how meditation can be a part of life and become a habit.

It seems to be not so much that I have an objective to it. It just becomes something natural I am doing. I don't feel right if I don't do it. Right is not the correct word. But I don't feel as comfortable, but not compulsive, I got to do this not that kind. It is ...peaceful. It allows me to centre, slowdown, just generally that type of thing. So I miss it if I don't do it.

The experience of another participant is quite different and it may be considered as a classic example of dependency on meditation.

When I don't take that 45 minutes or half an hour in the morning, then life eats me up, there's nothing left in me and in a few days, I'm cross, I yell at people, I act awful and if I remember to detach myself and sit quietly for half an hour then I have some chance of not losing everything all day.

Dependency on meditation may be as counterproductive to what one hope to achieve through meditation as any other negatively influencing factor. Hence, it is necessary to caution a practitioner to maintain a modicum of detachment regarding one's own practice.

Some tips for daily practice of meditation

Since meditation is understood as a multivariate phenomenon and in view of the many points discussed above, some guidelines for practitioners are suggested here. They are not exhaustive but useful.

- Don't carry a "mental baggage" when you want to learn meditation. Approach it with an innocent mind.
- Be aware of your expectations about meditation and your motivations.
- Be open to spiritual and transcendental possibilities. Understand the theoretical background of a system, if your goal is spiritual.
- Try to maintain regular practice.
- Stick to a particular system and technique for a fairly good length of time. Don't "hop, skip and jump" from one to another.
- Avoid disturbing factors.
- Seek facilitating conditions.
- Have a detached attitude.
- You can use meditation to resolve your psychological problems if you can take an observer's attitude.
- Don't practice when you are physically sick or psychologically very disturbed. It requires a fairly good amount of physical and mental stability to keep going with practice.

Twenty Scientific Reasons exclusively to start Meditating today

It improves your health

1. Increases immune function
2. Decreases pain
3. Decreases inflammation at the cellular level

It improves your happiness

4. Increases positive emotion
5. Decreases depression
6. Decreases anxiety
7. Decreases stress

It improves your social life

Think meditation is a solitary activity? It may be (unless you meditate in a group which many do!) but it actually increases your sense of connection to others:

8. Increases social connection and emotional intelligence (truly by yours)

9. Makes you more compassionate

10. Makes you feel less lonely

It improves your self-control

11. Improves your ability to regulate your emotions (*Ever flown off the handle or not been able to quiet your mind? Meditation is the key*)

12. Improves your ability to introspect

It changes your brain (for the better)

13. Increases grey matter

14. Increases volume in areas related to emotion regulation, positive emotions and self-control

15. Increases cortical thickness in areas related to paying attention

It improves your productivity (*yup, by doing nothing*)

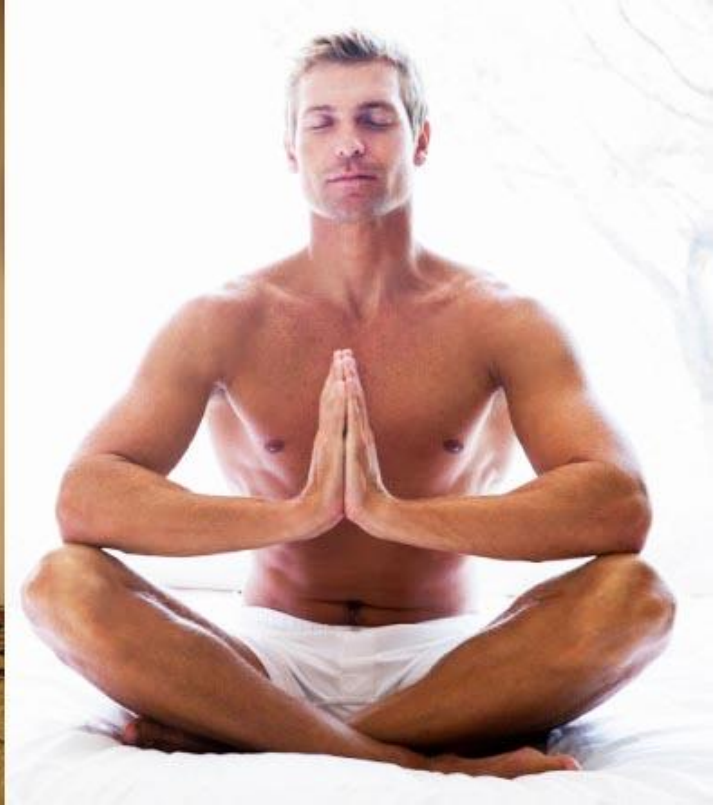
16. Increases your focus (concentration) and attention

17. Improves your ability to multitask

18. Improves your memory

19. Improves your ability to be creative and think outside the box

20. It Makes You wise(r)



Science behind Meditation and How to do it

The editor of the EBook has been meditating ever since the beginning of 1960s when he contacted “Unity School of Christianity, Lee’s Summit, Missouri, USA, where he attended an extensive course of roughly ten years on meditation and positive self-talk affirmations. Later his meditation practice was less and less religious. In fact, I’m strongly of the opinion that meditation isn’t just some “woo woo” thing for flakes. Think of meditation as weightlifting for your brain. And much like weightlifting, there are about million different ways to do it. But don’t take my word for it: Instead, let’s start by talking about the hard science of meditation and what it can do for you.

Meditation decreases beta waves

Even after the very first time you meditate, you’re going to see a significant decrease in beta waves. What the heck are beta waves? Basically, they’re information being processed by your brain. Why would you want to decrease that? Because most of the information your brain processes is useless junk, a bunch of noise preventing you from focusing on things you actually want to focus on. I’ll talk a bit more about this later when I tell you *how* to meditate.

Meditation helps you to focus

One of the most immediate benefits of calming down the beta wave cacophony is an increased ability to focus. You don't have to run away to the woods to make it happen either. Researchers found that a mere twenty minutes a day, four times a week made a significant difference in terms of ability to focus. And meditation has a cumulative effect to it, so you can imagine what 30 minutes every day will do for you.

Meditation decreases anxiety

And while we're discussing the science of meditation, a decrease in anxiety is one of the more well attested health benefits. This goes back to beta waves again — it's not just that there's less of them; it's also what the beta waves are actually doing other than creating a constant chorus of useless thoughts in your head. You're going to loosen up connections between parts of your brain that tell other parts of your brain to worry about traffic, or your next dentist appointment, or whatever you're anxious about that you don't need to be.

Meditation decreases your need for sleep

One of the more interesting things we know about meditation is that it makes you need less sleep. The study was done on people who just started meditating, not on those who have practiced for years. However, what the study found is that 40 minutes of meditation can be a better means of resting than 40 minutes of sleeping. Keep that in mind next time you run off for forty winks in the middle of a work day.

Meditation makes you more perceptive

A study conducted in 1984 found that those who meditate regularly are more perceptive than those who do not. In short, the researchers found that meditation practitioners needed a shorter period of time to register and recognize stimuli than their non-meditating counterparts.

Meditation makes your brain bigger

Want a bigger brain? Researchers at Harvard found out that meditation will help your brain to grow bigger by increasing your grey matter. They're not entirely sure *how* this is happening quite yet, but further studies are underway. For now, however, we know that meditation is scientifically proven to increase the mass of your brain. Not bad, right?

Meditation helps you to be more compassionate

Being a little — or even a lot — more compassionate can make you a more empathetic friend, partner and leader. Meditation can help to cultivate that

sensitivity. You need to make it a goal of your practice, but if you do, you're going to have more compassion even when you're not meditating.

Meditation will help you to remember things

The same study that found meditation increased compassion also found that it helped with rapid memory recall. That is to say, meditation won't just help you to remember things — it will help you to remember them faster. Whether you want to be a pub trivia champion or you're working on building mind mansions, a faster recall can be a great tool in your toolkit.

Meditation increases creativity

For the entrepreneur or creative professional, creativity is an absolute must. As you probably guessed, meditation is going to help you to increase your creativity. Researchers at Leiden University in The Netherlands found that certain forms of meditation open up your mind to new ideas. This isn't in the abstract: What it means is that your internal censor is less active after certain forms of meditation, allowing you to fully realize ideas that you might otherwise shut down before they fully blossom.

Meditation: How to do it

As I've mentioned, there are *tons* of different ways to meditate. There's guided meditation, mantra meditation, Zazen meditation, mindfulness meditation, Tai Chi meditation, transcendental meditation...

You get the idea.

Still, if you're reading this article, you want to go ahead and get started. So here's your quick guide from The Art of Charm on how to start meditating right away in a manner that's going to provide you with immediate benefits.

- **Set the right environment.** Turn off your phone. Close the laptop. Don't play music. Make your environment as quiet and tranquil as possible. Plan to do anything you can to avoid interruption.
- **Set an alarm.** Pick a time, starting with ten minutes, though the longer the better. Half an hour is great if you can do it. Set your alarm and forget it. Don't worry about how long you've been meditating or how long you have to go.
- **Get your physical stress out.** Progressive muscle relaxation is a great way to prepare for meditation. Spend five or ten minutes doing this before you meditate and it will make a huge difference.
- **Find a comfortable position for sitting.** You can sit in a chair, on a pillow, or on the floor. The main thing is that you need to be *sitting up* not

lying down, as the latter is almost always a recipe for falling asleep. If you want to find a “mystical” pose to help you get in the mood, go for it, but it’s not necessary.

- **Settle into position.** Take a couple seconds to settle into position. Wiggle around a little bit. But once you’re set, stay there. In fact, learning to sit still — without moving, scratching or otherwise adjusting yourself — is a lot of what the early stages of learning to meditate are about.
- **Close your eyes.** Some forms of meditation don’t require this. For now, close your eyes.
- **Breathe.** A lot of meditation is really just about breathing. There are different ways to do this, but one basic way is what’s called “four fold breath.” Breathe in for four seconds. Hold your breath for four seconds. Breathe out for four seconds. Hold for four seconds. Focus on getting this right for a bit and it will eventually become automatic.
- **Let thoughts flow through you.** A lot of guys think they need to fight against thoughts. Nothing could be further from the truth. Instead, just let them flow by like clouds through the sky. If it helps, say “thinking” when you have a thought and go back to focusing on nothing.
- **Do the time you committed to.** Don’t be surprised if it’s difficult to meditate at first. We’re so used to being constantly stimulated that when we’re finally not, it can be uncomfortable or difficult. But do whatever time you set out to do. It’s not going to kill you. On the contrary, in many cases it can be the missing piece of the puzzle. Focusing on quieting our mind allows us to better use it when we need to, rather than constantly being consumed by mental chatter.

As with anything else you’re introducing in your schedule, it’s important to make time for this. One way you can do this is just by blocking it out on your schedule. Then you’re going to find it harder to come up with reasons to not meditate. Even if you can’t do it every day (though you’ll find the best results that way), you can treat it like going to the gym — do it three or even five times a week.

Meditation has a number of proven benefits, but the biggest one is just having a greater mastery over your mind. Leaders and celebrities from Barry Zito and Rupert Murdoch to Rick Rubin and David Lynch meditate. Just like your muscles need exercise, so do your focus and concentration.

The science of meditation is real, and it can make a huge difference in your life. Try it for yourself.

Brain Waves and Meditation

We all know that meditation helps relax people, but what exactly happens in the brain during meditation? A new study suggests that nondirective meditation yields more marked changes in electrical brain wave activity associated with wakeful, relaxed attention than just resting without any specific mental technique.

Forget once for all about crystals and candles, and about sitting and breathing in awkward ways, it may appeal to devotion and beauty but absolutely unnecessary. Meditation research explores how the brain works when we refrain from concentration, rumination and intentional thinking. Electrical brain waves suggest that mental activity during meditation is wakeful and relaxed.

"Given the popularity and effectiveness of meditation as a means of alleviating stress and maintaining good health, there is a pressing need for a rigorous investigation of how it affects brain function," says Professor Jim Lagopoulos of Sydney University, Australia. Lagopoulos is the principal investigator of a joint study between his university and researchers from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) on changes in electrical brain activity during nondirective meditation.

Constant brain waves

Whether we are mentally active, resting or asleep, the brain always has some level of electrical activity. The study monitored the frequency and location of electrical brain waves through the use of EEG (electroencephalography). EEG electrodes were placed in standard locations of the scalp using a custom-made hat

Participants were experienced practitioners of Acem Meditation (International Meditation Retreats Centre in Oslo), a nondirective method developed in Norway. They were asked to rest, eyes closed, for 20 minutes, and to meditate for another 20 minutes, in random order. The abundance and location of slow to fast electrical brain waves (delta, theta, alpha, beta) provide a good indication of brain activity.

Relaxed attention with theta

During meditation, theta waves were most abundant in the frontal and middle parts of the brain.

"These types of waves likely originate from a relaxed attention that monitors our inner experiences. Here lies a significant difference between meditation and relaxing without any specific technique," emphasizes Lagopoulos.

"Previous studies have shown that theta waves indicate deep relaxation and occur more frequently in highly experienced meditation practitioners. The source is probably frontal parts of the brain, which are associated with monitoring of other mental processes."

"When we measure mental calm, these regions signal to lower parts of the brain, inducing the physical relaxation response that occurs during meditation."

Silent experiences with alpha

Alpha waves were more abundant in the posterior parts of the brain during meditation than during simple relaxation. They are characteristic of wakeful rest.

"This wave type has been used as a universal sign of relaxation during meditation and other types of rest," comments Professor Øyvind Ellingsen from NTNU. "The amount of alpha waves increases when the brain relaxes from intentional, goal-oriented tasks. This is a sign of deep relaxation, -- but it does not mean that the mind is void."

Neuroimaging studies by Malia F. Mason and co-workers at Dartmouth College NH suggest that the normal resting state of the brain is a silent current of thoughts, images and memories that is not induced by sensory input or intentional reasoning, but emerges spontaneously "from within."

"Spontaneous wandering of the mind is something you become more aware of and familiar with when you meditate," continues Ellingsen, who is an experienced practitioner. "This default activity of the brain is often underestimated. It probably represents a kind of mental processing that connects various experiences and emotional residues, puts them into perspective and lays them to rest."

Different from sleep

Delta waves are characteristic of sleep. There was little delta during the relaxing and meditative tasks, confirming that nondirective meditation is different from sleep.

Beta waves occur when the brain is working on goal-oriented tasks, such as planning a date or reflecting actively over a particular issue. EEG showed few beta waves during meditation and resting.

"These findings indicate that you step away from problem solving both when relaxing and during meditation," says Ellingsen.

Nondirective versus concentration

Several studies indicate better relaxation and stress management by meditation techniques where you refrain from trying to control the content of the mind.

"These methods are often described as nondirective, because practitioners do not actively pursue a particular experience or state of mind. They cultivate the ability to tolerate the spontaneous wandering of the mind without getting too much involved. Instead of concentrating on getting away from stressful thought and emotions, you simply let them pass in an effortless way."

Take home message

Nondirective meditation yields more marked changes in electrical brain wave activity associated with wakeful, relaxed attention, than just resting without any specific mental technique.

The Process of Meditation

(Along the teaching of Dr. Roberto Assagioli, MD)

The Process of Meditation

Most people have only a vague idea of what meditation really is, and we need to clarify how it is accomplished, how it functions, what it achieves, and the service it can give.

Thought is an energy, an unseen but real power, and through meditation we can focus it to build, to feed, to maintain an idea, a quality or a rule or law of life. As we have said, meditation is inner action – action in the inner worlds. There are many kinds of inner action; all thinking, hoping, imagining, all aspiration and desire, are activities of this type, but they are generally carried on without conscious intention and without a sense of responsibility. *Meditation, on the other hand is conscious deliberate inner action to fulfil a specific purpose.*

We can get a good idea of the different kinds of action and their definite stages, which we propose to master in meditation – from the analogy of a missile being sent into space, pursuing its course and returning to earth. A corresponding cycle takes place in the meditation process.

The first stage is that of projection. The propelling energy of the missile conquering the downward pull of gravity projects it upwards into orbit around the earth, or beyond. In the same way we can project our centre of consciousness upwards, through the sphere of feeling and imagination, and penetrate to the world of thought and even further – to transpersonal levels. Our propelling energy is that of aspiration, which has aptly been called "fiery aspiration", and we direct it – as in fact we must direct the whole meditation process by the great unrealized potency of the will.

The second stage for the missile is its approach to the gravitational field of another centre of attraction. In meditation this corresponds to coming into

contact with some higher centre of energy or life, some realm of thought, or some specific region in the inner worlds.

The next stage is the delicate one of utilizing the pull from the new centre. If this is rightly achieved, the self-propelling energy still existing in the missile will enable it to circle around the new centre, keeping in orbit. The same is true of the individual consciousness in penetrating to higher, inner levels. It has to attain the region towards which it is directed, but must maintain its freedom and not become a prisoner of it. It must remain in that area only as long as is required for its purpose, that is, the experiencing and registering of whatever can be gathered from the centre with which rapport is being made, or from the region of thought attained. Then we should bring the meditation to a close harmoniously and intentionally.

The essential task of receiving information from the instruments in the missile corresponds to our registering and rightly interpreting the ideas that we find in the higher realms; and, finally, all of this has to be utilized and integrated into our existing knowledge and experience, as is the information obtained from the missile.

There is still a further point in this analogy; control of the missiles and knowledge of their position with respect to the earth is maintained throughout their whole course. So it is with meditation, conscious control should never be lost. It is possible to fall into a state of unconsciousness, but projection to this extent is wrong and dangerous. Meditation must always be a *conscious* process, we must remain fully aware the whole time, and from this point of awareness – here, where we are – direct the whole process, watching it, controlling it, and regulating its extension and duration. (*Dr. Roberto Assagioli*)

Preparation

Much of the success of meditation depends upon right and careful preparation. To begin with, as quiet a place as possible should be chosen at least until we are used to meditating – where we can feel that our privacy will not be disturbed. We should sit in a comfortable position. While the Eastern way of sitting cross-legged has the advantage of keeping the spine erect, it is a difficult posture for those who are not accustomed to it, and is not necessary. An effective preliminary to meditation is to read or study something connected with the theme we will be meditating on, and if there is time we should do this as it greatly facilitates the tuning in of the mind. (*Dr. Roberto Assagioli*)

Relaxation

Next, we should try to eliminate all physical, emotional, and mental tension, because such tension is a quite useless expenditure of both nervous and

muscular energy. Relaxation is an art that has to be worked at, and it is not as simple as it may appear. In trying to achieve it, we are apt to fall into the opposite extreme – a state of passivity which ends in drowsiness. The aim is to eliminate all superfluous tension, while retaining the muscular tone necessary for alertness and for full attention to what we are doing.

The various techniques of relaxation cannot be described here, but there are many books which go fully into the different aspects of this subject. One of the most effective ways of achieving relaxation is through slow, rhythmic breathing. But breathing exercises should be done with caution, for they can be harmful if carried out too strenuously. An adequate exercise consists of a deep breath with short pauses held at the end of each in-breathing and each out-breathing. This can be done about ten times, rhythmically and slowly. There should be no sense of strain, either in breathing or during the pauses, steady rhythm rather than length of time being the aim. The respiratory muscles should be relaxed with the out-breathing; this "letting go" of tension can then be diffused to all the other muscles of the body and a general relaxation achieved.

Physical relaxation is a first and necessary step to the more important one of psychological relaxation. The latter comprises emotional and mental relaxation, which have to be achieved in two distinct phases corresponding to the two different levels of the inner worlds on which we will be working – the emotional and mental. Each has to be handled separately and in its own way.

If, after relaxing physically, we begin to observe ourselves psychologically, we generally find that various feelings come and go. These emotions have to subside. It is not good to repress them forcibly, but the very fact of calmly observing them from what might be called "above", without being identified with them, causes them gradually to lose their hold and their intensity, so that they cease to sway us and quiet down – if not completely, at least to a degree in which they no longer constitute a serious obstacle; and that is good enough.

This forms the first part of psychological relaxation; the second part is mental relaxation. By nature the mind is restless and in continuous activity, and this is increased by the high tempo of modern life and also by emotional stimulation. If we have managed to exclude for the moment the activities of ordinary life and have quieted the emotions, it will be less difficult to deal with the natural restlessness of the mind itself.

This cannot be done completely in the preparatory stage; it will be the chief task in the first part of the actual meditation, which is concentration. In the preparatory stage it is enough to reach a certain degree of dis-identification from the mind's activity and to resist being carried by it this way and that, distinguishing this activity from the consciousness of the self, whom we could call the "Observer." This provides what might be regarded as a platform from

which to go on to the actual meditation, Here, also, the aim is not to suppress by violence, or by an effort which immediately brings tension and therefore defeats its object. The method to be used is more that of attrition, of not feeding with interest any stray thoughts or images which remain in the mind; they will not then interfere seriously with the inner action of meditation. This preparation could be described as making room in and around the centre of consciousness for the exercises of concentration that are to follow, yet without attempting to clear the whole area completely at this stage. (*Dr. Roberto Assagioli*)

The Technique of Dis-identification

The spiritual journey is a movement away from over-identification with the body and mind to the rediscovery of our true identity as infinite Being, and this can be two different movements. The first movement is dis-identification with the body and mind. Since identification is just a movement of thought, dis-identification is simply a movement away from thought. The ego identification that we experience most of the time is the result of repeated thoughts about "I," "me," and "mine." That is all there is to it, but while we are thinking these thoughts the sense of self is contained in them. And since most of our self-referencing thoughts are about our body, our thoughts, our feelings, and our desires, the sense of self is usually contained in the body and mind.

Dis-identification from the thought form of the ego can occur whenever there is a deep questioning of the assumption that is present in most of our thoughts that we are the body and the mind. Inquiry using the question, "Who am I?" can naturally weaken the assumption that we are the body and the mind. In fact, any deep questioning of our thoughts and assumptions can loosen our over-identification with thought, since so many of our thoughts aren't very true. Experiences of no thought can also weaken this identification because in the absence of thought, is an absence of identification. We all experience this when we get so caught up in what we are doing that we completely "forget ourselves."

Alternatively, sensing the Presence that is aware of the thoughts can also disentangle us from the tendency to identify with our thoughts. The second movement of the spiritual journey is this recognition, or realization, of our true nature as Presence, or limitless Awareness. It is a wonderful surprise to discover that everything that really matters in life, including peace, joy, and love, is found in this empty Awareness. This emptiness is incredibly full and rich. It has intelligence, strength, and compassion. Whenever we experience a deeper quality of Being, such as clarity, peace, satisfaction, value, happiness, or love, it's coming from this spacious Presence.

The surprising thing is that while these two movements can occur simultaneously, they can also happen apart from each other. When this happens,

the movement from ego identification to our essential nature is incomplete. Although it's a profound insight and a huge relief to discover, by examining and questioning our thoughts, that we are not the body or the mind (after all, if I'm not my body, then these aren't my aches and pains; and if I'm not my mind, then these aren't my problems), by itself this insight only reveals our false assumptions, not the truth about who we really are. So it's possible to dissolve the ego by seeing through the mind without actually experiencing our true nature, which is a Heart-centred experience. In a sense, you can wake up out of your mind but not be in your Heart.

When this happens, there is a sense of relief from all the grief caused by over-identification with the body and mind but also often a deep sense of meaninglessness: If *I* don't exist, then what's the point? It doesn't matter anymore what the fictional *I* does or what happens to it. In fact, it feels like nothing matters at all because everything is so clearly an illusion.

When seekers are led or just find their own way to a deep experience of no self, they can then form a new, more subtle belief that this absence of self is all there is. "I'm not my body, I'm not my mind, I don't exist" are seen as the final conclusions. From a purely logical perspective, what more is there to say, since there's no one here to say it or hear it! And while these conclusions are true, they aren't the *whole* truth.

Underlying all the mind's activity is the non-conceptual reality of Being, or our true nature. It is a pure, empty, aware space that is full of the subtle substance of Presence and all of its essential qualities: peace, joy, love, clarity, strength, value, and much more. How can that be-empty space that is full of everything that matters? The mind can't grasp it fully, as Presence exists beyond concepts. And yet, that is what we really are. We experience it with more subtle senses than the physical senses and the mind. We "sense" it by being it. We just are this full, yet empty, Presence.

It is this second movement of realization of Presence that counteracts the belief that since I (as ego) don't exist, therefore nothing exists and everything is an illusion. The realization of Presence, or Essence, gives back to our life a heartfelt sense of meaning and purpose, which becomes a pure expression of the wonder and beauty of this deeper reality. Instead of living a life in service to the ego's wants and needs, we are moved to fulfil the deepest purpose of a human life: to serve and express freedom, joy, beauty, peace and love. By itself, the realization of no self can end up dry and lifeless, but when the Heart opens wide to the greater truth of the true Self, life is anything but dry and lifeless.

The opposite can also occur: Our awareness can move into pure Presence and be filled with a sense of the limitless goodness of our true nature. And while any experience of our true nature does, to some extent, loosen the identification with

the limited idea of ourselves that we call the ego, an experience of our true nature by itself doesn't always dissolve the ego completely. Having a profound experience of our true nature doesn't take away our capacity to identify. It doesn't render us incapable of thought. We can still return to thinking of ourselves as a limited self-but one that has now tasted our true nature.

So, after such an experience, if the habit of identification with the body and mind does continue, it may still be necessary to deconstruct the mistaken beliefs related to ego identification. There's a place for inquiring into the false beliefs and assumptions of our identification with the body and mind, and a place for inquiring into the underlying reality. The difference is that inquiry into our true nature isn't a purely mental activity. Because of the subtle nature of Presence, the inquiry has to be subtle and wholehearted. To discover what's really here requires subtlety, patience, persistence, courage, tenderness, compassion, curiosity, and ultimately everything you've got! The momentum of our usual identification with thoughts and physical reality shapes our perception to such a great degree that breaking through to the more subtle dimensions of perception can be a challenge.

It helps to pursue the inquiry into true nature with both the Heart and the body. The mind's view is so easily distorted by belief and conditioning that the experience beneath the shoulders is often a more direct and open doorway into Presence. What are you experiencing right now in your shoulders? In your heart? In your belly? What is the space around your arms and legs like right now? Is there energy flowing in your body right now? Questions like these can direct you to a more fruitful exploration, especially if you ask them with your whole being and not just with your mind.

It is a saving grace that this deeper reality is always present. Sometimes it only touches us in an unguarded moment of deep loss or profound beauty. In the end, there's no escaping from the truth. Illusions come and go, beliefs come and go, but the underlying Presence remains.

To experience Presence, all we have to do is stop believing in our thoughts and sense our being. It is really that simple, although doing this isn't necessarily easy. One of the things that makes experiencing Presence a challenge is the sense of identity we naturally have. Anytime we add something to the statement "I am," as in "I am scared" or "I am a bird watcher," our identity moves into that thought. This is what it means to identify with thought. A thought by itself has little power or significance. But a thought that begins with "I" or "I am" or one that is about me, my possessions, or my experience evokes a sense of identity. It's as if our true nature moves into or tries on the shape and feel of the thought. Dissolving or deconstructing the thoughts that we identify with can free our essential identity from an assumption that it is somehow contained in our body

or our mind. Seeing the falseness of those ideas opens the door for our deepest sense of our own existence to move out of the tight confines of our beliefs and ego identifications.

Often when the sense of self is set free from the structures of ego-centred thought, it naturally expands into a full experience of true nature. We call a sudden expansion into true nature like this an awakening, as it seems we have awakened to a whole new reality that is rich and full of joy, peace, and love.

However, then it is possible for the sense of self, or identity, to move into a different belief or an assumption of no self. This happens most often when the focus of a teaching or inquiry is on the negation of false identifications, without a counter-balancing emphasis on the underlying reality of Presence. Some spiritual practices are specifically designed to negate false identifications, such as the practice of seeing that you are not this and not that until nothing is left. Some spiritual teachers and teachings emphasize the non-existence of a separate individual and go on to suggest that not only is the individual not real, but the world and everything in it is also not real.

There is a profound truth in this perspective, as it penetrates and dissolves the usual belief or assumption that the ego, our thoughts, and physical reality are more real than more subtle levels of reality. Even when we have tasted a deeper reality, we often return to an ego-centred perspective because of the momentum of our involvement with the physical and mental realms. Even in the face of profound experiences to the contrary, there's a habit of assuming that our physical body and our beliefs and other thoughts are what is most important, so much so that we think that everything that pops into our heads is important. We even use the argument, "That's what I think" to justify our position, as if thinking something makes it true. Since our most common thought or assumption is the assumption that "I am the body" or "I am my thoughts, feelings, and desires," this pointing to the falseness or incompleteness of those most basic beliefs is vitally important to loosening the grip of the ego.

However, in the absence of the experience of our true nature, there is this danger of the sense of self simply landing on a new belief in no self. The sense of self moves from a limited and painful identification with the mind's idea of who you are to a more open and freeing idea of emptiness and non-existence. While this may be a relief, it can eventually be just as limiting as the original ego identification. When our sense of self has identified with nothingness, emptiness, or no self, we can become stuck there. This is often reflected in a kind of defensiveness of this new identification: Anytime you are challenged, you deflect the criticism or conflict by retreating more fully into the idea of no self. Or you turn the tables on those challenging you and try to convince them that they don't exist, therefore their concerns aren't valid. This new identification

with no self can feel flat, dry, and detached. Life feels like it has no meaning or value. So what was once a helpful and freeing dissolving of limiting structures has become a new fossilized and limiting identity.

Because it is your essential identity or sense of self that moves into or identifies with the concept of emptiness or no self, it is a very convincing new identification. Whenever identity moves into an experience, it doesn't just experience it but actually becomes it to a degree. When your sense of self is firmly planted in the body and egoic mind, it feels like that is who you are. And when, instead of just experiencing emptiness, your identity or sense of self moves fully into emptiness or no self, it also is very convincingly felt as who you are. When you move so fully into identification with something that it no longer feels like an experience but who you really are, the experience becomes more global and convincing.

This is the power of identification to make an egoic thought and the false self, or ego, seem more real than it is. The power of identification can also make the dry emptiness and meaninglessness of no "self" seem more real. They are both illusions, but it is through identification that illusions are made to seem real. Being or consciousness is ultimately the one that is identifying, and when limitless eternal Being identifies to create illusion, it does a good job of it!

However, no matter how powerful the illusion of the egoic self or no self is when we are identified with it, identification is still simply a movement of thought followed by a movement of our sense of self into that thought. Since thought is always a temporary phenomenon, no identification is ever permanent. In fact, every identification only lasts as long as the thought triggering it. We become "stuck" in identification by repeating a lot of similar thoughts. The sense of an egoic self or no self are both created by a pattern of repeated thoughts that identity moves into.

Because this movement of thought is temporary, there is always, in every moment, the possibility of touching the deeper reality of our true nature. What is even more amazing is when, with repeated experiences of our true nature, our identity, or sense of self, moves into the realm of essential reality. Eventually it becomes obvious that Presence is actually who we are. When our identity moves into our true nature, there is no suffering and no dryness or emptiness. We simply are all of the peace, joy, and love in the universe.

There is nothing you can do to move your identity, or sense of self, into your true nature. Identity isn't something you do; it is what you are. However, the sense of identity follows your awareness, and since you are ultimately everything, it can and will identify with whatever is in your awareness. This is the danger of a teaching that doesn't point to or convey the existence of true nature. If something isn't even talked about or considered, it's much less likely

that awareness will notice it and that identity will shift into it. This is why it's important to teach and explore all the qualities of Presence, such as joy, peace, and love, so that awareness begins to touch them and identity eventually shifts to the underlying truth of Being.

A subtle distinction needs to be made between your true identity and the sense of self you have in any moment. Your true identity has and always will be the infinite spaciousness of Being, including all forms, both physical and subtle, and all of the formless emptiness of pure space. But your sense of self is a flexible means for this limitless Being to experience itself from many different perspectives. By having this ability to move in and out of all kinds of experiences and appear to become them by identifying with them, Being gets to try on many different experiences or illusions, from the most contracted and limited to the most expanded and blissful. Without this capacity, Being would be a static existence of infinite potential that is never expressed. By moving its identity into and identifying with the myriad perspectives of limited experience, this potential becomes experienced in form and movement.

So while mis-identification is the root of all your "problems," it isn't and never has been a mistake. Being has very purposefully shifted its identity in and out of infinite apparent selves to try them all on for size. Being stuck in identification is itself an illusion, since all identification is temporary. Every expression of life is an expression of the right way to be, if the right way to be is simply to express our limitless capacity to experience identification and dis-identification, form and formlessness. The deepest, fullest experience of anything is to become it, and that is what Being has been up to all along.

The ultimate freedom is the discovery that it is fine to identify and dis-identify. True freedom demands no limits, not even limits against limitation. Since Being itself is completely free and cannot be harmed, it has been endlessly exploring every possibility of that freedom. This perspective will allow you to hold everything, even the spiritual journey, lightly. The goal is and always has been the journey itself. You can be curious about this whole process of identification with the ego, with no self, and with true nature simply for its own sake. It is a rich and mysterious world of perception and reality that we as consciousness inhabit. Why not taste it all? Life is and has always been this endless movement in and out of identification, in and out of forms and formlessness.

Finally, here is a short fairy tale about Being, which captures some of this freedom in a story:

Once upon no time, there was an infinite and eternal Being. Needless to say this was one big Being. Being infinite and eternal meant that no matter where or when it went, there it was. And of course, anything that

big was made of empty space, as space is the only thing big enough to be that infinite.

While space is a wonderfully low maintenance thing to be, since it can't be harmed, this Being still had a problem: There was no one else. Since it was already everywhere and every-when, there was no place or time for anyone else. It was not a horrible problem, but still there was no one else to talk to, dance with, or play with.

What's an infinite Being to do? It can't really just create lesser beings inside of itself as that would not be very interesting to an infinite Being. For a truly infinite and eternal being to create little lesser beings to play with would be like you or me making dolls to play with as an adult. There's nothing wrong with that, but that's not very interesting after a while.

Then it had a great idea! Being infinite meant it also had infinite potential, so rather than create lesser beings, it decided to create more infinite beings. At first this would seem impossible since there is the question of where would you put another infinite Being? There already is no space left over once you have one infinite Being. But the great thing about space is that it is completely empty as long as it's pure space or pure potential, so two spaces can actually occupy the same space!

That was the solution! So Being created an infinite number of infinite space Beings just like itself. In a sense, Being cloned itself. Now, rather than having just a wind-up doll version of a Being to relate to, it had real, fully amazing infinite Beings like itself to relate to.

Even better, it quickly discovered that as long as one of the infinite space Beings stayed "home" as infinite space to hold the endless universes in place, then all of the rest were free to contract into all kinds of shapes and sizes. In fact, all a Being of infinite potential has to do to contract into a different shape or size is think about it, and voila it happens! That's the power of infinite potential!

Now not only could all these infinite Beings hang out as one very big space (which of course really meant hanging out as one Being, since two spaces in the same space are really still just one space), they could also play at contracting into all kinds of lesser expressions of their infinite potential.

Now why would they want to do that? Why would something infinite want to experience being less than its infinite self? Well remember these Beings are not only infinite, but also eternal, and eternity is a very long time! That means they all had a lot of time to kill. What does it matter if you

spend a little time experiencing yourself as less than your complete potential, especially if you can do an entire eon standing on your head and still have all the time in the world?

And so Being, as many Beings, was now free to talk, dance, create, and play in all kinds of crazy wonderful ways because now there was someone else to talk, dance, create, and play with. Party time!!!

Ever since, it has been discovering all of the different things it can identify with and temporarily become and all of the truly strange and amazing things it can do once it has become less than itself. Infinite space can't really play soccer or be a super nova or fall in love or have its heart broken or create a new universe or fly a kite when it's expanded into its original nature as infinite space, but if it contracts into a form or expression of itself, then it can do all of that and more!

So that is what it's been up to ever since, and it's really just getting started, since it still has so much time on its hands; the rest of eternity is still a very long time. That is also why it's so amazing to relate to others: because it is never some lesser incomplete being across the table from you. It is always an infinite Being with infinite potential that you are talking to or playing with. No wonder they are so convincing in their role as an apparent separate individual. It is really God playing that role. There are only Gods upon Gods upon Gods being everybody and everything and doing everything that is done! That is what we all are.

Concentration

In taking up the subject of concentration the first point to realize is the difference between spontaneous or automatic concentration and deliberate controlled concentration. They are different. both in nature and in the way they work. What is called spontaneous concentration is the functioning of the mind under the impulse of a strong interest, desire or feeling, which keeps it working along a certain line. A typical example is the businessman as he plans for the success of his organization. Another example is the student's concentration on the subjects on which he expects to be examined.

Those who can concentrate effectively in this way are under the illusion that their power of concentration is good. And it does indicate a certain aspect of it, but the ability to keep the mind on a task or subject when driven by intense interest, need or fear, does not necessarily mean that it can be done when that incentive is lacking. The fact is that when we try to concentrate on some abstract subject, or on something which entails no personal interest or benefit, we find it much more difficult and frequently discover that we have no real control over our minds after all.

It is evidence that our emotions, drives, and thoughts play, almost dramatically, through us and are the strong forces in our lives. In other words, we are driven by them and are not ourselves the choosing, directing, controlling factor.

This is one reason why the more purely mental or spiritual interests have not the driving potential of the usual personal interests of the average nun. Another reason is an inherent difference in the nature of these interests. Abstract subjects are "thinner"; they are more intangible for the mind to take hold of and focus on. The mind, being less accustomed to this subtler and more difficult way of functioning, is reluctant to face it and turns away. It is a new kind of activity, and generally speaking any new subject or new area of knowledge presents difficulties to begin with. Our minds do not like starting to work in new fields; in those with which they are familiar much work has already been done; there is a background or experience and there are connections which make the work easier. A new subject requires much more concentration and effort.

The realization that we are not the masters of our minds may shock us, but if it does, that is good; it will galvanize us into making efforts towards such mastery, and will help to provide the emotional incentive which was lacking previously. Another important result of these discoveries about ourselves is awareness that there is a difference between ourselves and our minds and emotion. The unsuccessful effort to keep the mind at work has shown that there is a conflict and conflict means that there are two factions which disagree. This awareness of conflict is valuable, therefore, in bringing to light the difference between the "I" with its own will, and the mind, which is often unruly, reluctant or lazy, and has, in a way, a life of its own.

These preliminary but vital recognitions provide a foundation for the task of learning to concentrate the mind *at will*. They bring understanding of ourselves and give the incentive we need to become masters of this precious instrument, the mind, which is so excellent a servant when dominated, but which gives such trouble when it goes its own way.

The initial technique to be used in acquiring mastery over the mind, and ability to concentrate at will is to begin with concentration on simple and neutral subjects which have no interest for us. In this way we learn to hold the mind steady without the help of personal interest and desire. There are many types of such exercises in concentration which can be practiced. Visual perception is a simple one and consequently a good one to work with first. It is a training of attention, not of thought processes, and it develops an elementary ability to focus the attention, which is the first step in the more advanced and complex processes of meditation on abstract subjects.

A simple exercise in visual perception is to observe a set of objects rapidly and accurately. For instance, observe the contents of a room for half a minute, and

then write as detailed an account of them as possible. The same exercise can be done by looking in a shop window or examining a picture.

Exercises in observing outward objects are a preparation for concentration on inner objects – on inner pictures or images. An exercise which provides a transition between the two is to observe a picture for twenty or thirty seconds, then close the eyes and try to keep the image of the picture in the "mind's eye" or "inner eye." We all have this power of imagination in the sense of being able to picture objects, faces and so on, which are familiar. It is more developed and vivid in some people than others, but for the present purpose it is not so much the vividness which is important as the power to keep the picture steady before the mind's eye, and to be able to concentrate the attention on it. Looking at the picture for a time helps considerably in getting a clear image, and therefore in the holding of it.

A second exercise of this type is to evoke an image and keep it steady for a short time without having looked at it just before. One can start with some familiar object, such as a building that is seen every day, a view one knows, or a member of the family. The image should be built precisely, with concentration on the details, and then held steady for a certain time.

Here begins a real fight – an interesting but sometimes exasperating skirmish – between our will to keep the image steady and the fluid nature of the imagination, which is accustomed to pass from one thing to another in rapid and often disordered succession. It will play all sorts of tricks; it will distort the image, enlarge, add some alien element to it, divide it into two or more parts, substitute something else for it, in fact do anything and everything except let the picture remain quietly before the mind's eye.

This fact is again revealing. Once more we have undeniable evidence that we are not the masters of our mechanism and that there is conflict between it and ourselves. It is here that the process of self-mastery really begins in the sense of controlling, directing, and using – at will – our whole mechanism.

Apart from these specific exercises, there is ample opportunity for us to train our concentration during everyday life. It means simply giving full attention to the matter at hand without letting the mind wander. Habitual actions are frequently carried out in a more or less dreamy way, with stray thoughts about extraneous things playing through the mind. This creates a state of passive dissociation which can grow to harmful proportions, and is in any case a waste of energy. Concentration on the other hand enhances the ability to live in the present in general, and specifically in that focused section or area of the present where our immediate activity lies.

There is a higher and more important form of concentration than those types so far dealt with. It is that of the Observer or inner Spectator who, perfectly concentrated himself, observes the flowing panorama of the psychological life – called by William James the "mind stream" – and in a detached way perceives it, assesses it and, when needed, intervenes to change it. Such an inner attitude is not at all easy to maintain consistently. Being what might be termed "on the bank" of the mind stream, we tend to be drawn into it by its currents. The attention is easily caught by some surge of emotion, by some interesting idea, by some impelling drive, and we have to draw it back continually to the centre of concentration, to the self, the awareness, the part in us which is persistent and unchanging throughout all the variations of the psychological flow.

The key to acquiring the power of concentration is, as in every other skill, prolonged patience and repeated practice. Two extremes should be avoided. One is doing these apparently uninteresting exercises in a more or less perfunctory way, as a kind of routine; this would be too superficial to serve much purpose. The other extreme to be avoided is working with them too strenuously and forcibly. Nor should we attempt to do these exercises when tired for then there is little likelihood of success, and any progress made will be at the cost of too great a strain.

Another point is that we should not be discouraged by initial lack of success, especially the inability to maintain concentration for a certain time. At first it is good enough if we can achieve real concentration for ten and then twenty seconds; a minute or two is quite long. So it is better to carry out repeated short exercises with some success than try forcibly to keep the attention fixed for a longer time.

Finally there are two helpful attitudes which, as the Observer, each of us should try to maintain through all the experiments and exercises. The first of these is patience with ourselves or, more accurately, with our mechanism – the attitude that we would adopt towards an unruly child whose cooperation we hoped to gain in the end. The other attitude is confidence that persistence will bring success. The following words of Hermann Keyserling – from his *Travel Diary of a Philosopher* – will reinforce our confidence as well as emphasize the value of what we are attempting to achieve:

Undoubtedly the power of concentration is the real propelling power of the whole of our psychic mechanism. Nothing heightens our capacity for performance as much as its increase; every success, no matter in what domain, can be traced back to the intelligent use of this power. No obstacle can resist permanently the exceptional power of utmost concentration. Attention forces every problem sooner or later to reveal all of its aspects which are capable of recognition by a specific nature. (*Dr. Roberto Assagioli*)

Reflective Meditation

The simplest definition of the first kind of meditation mentioned *reflective meditation* – is just "thinking". This is a correct definition as far as it goes, but it does not go very far, for generally we do not give much thought to thinking! We imagine that, being intelligent, we can *think* whereas just thinking about anything that interests us is in fact only an elementary state of mental activity.

It has been said that usually the mind "thinks in us", rather than that we think. This means that the activity of the mind is a process that as a rule goes on pretty much by itself promoted by stimuli or drives of different kinds and flowing in a disorderly way, one train of thought driven out by a second, the second by a third, and so on. To describe this state of affairs in a more exact way, we can say that normally the mind is largely independent from the "I" and from the will; it is interfered with all the time by emotions, drives, images, and external stimuli, and reacts to them. Such mental activity scarcely deserves the name of real thinking, for it is only when a strong urge or interest keeps the mind at work that it functions in an orderly and productive way.

Spontaneous – what we might call unconscious or unrealized – meditation is often practiced by people who do not give it that name. The scientist working out a problem, the philosopher thinking out a concept, the business man intelligently planning the organization of his affairs, are all examples of this, for they are all demonstrating coherent organized use of the mind – of the thinking function.

As a preliminary to true meditation, we must realize that the mind is in fact a tool, an inner tool, from which we must dis-identify ourselves in order to facilitate its proper use. The practice of concentration teaches us the first step – how to control the mind, how to keep it steady and one-pointed in the chosen direction. Now comes the next step – that of not keeping it still but making it proceed, walk, so to speak, along the way we want it to go, towards some chosen goal.

Thinking in this sense means reflecting or brooding upon a given, well-defined subject, and working out all the implications, ramifications, and meanings implicit in it. And meditation can be said to be an unbroken flow of thought toward the object of concentration.

The first requirement, then for developing the art of thinking is to give close attention to the actual process of thinking, for example, to notice immediately when its course begins to deviate as a result of either emotional reaction or preconceived mental attitude, or – as is frequently the case – in response to the process of mechanical association, which carries the mind through a series of allied subjects to a point far from the starting place.

The second requirement is *persistence* – thinking *through*. Here some rather curious things happen. At first, after a few minutes of reflective thinking, it may seem that the subject has been exhausted, that there is nothing left to think about. But if we persist through this blank period and continue to reflect, we begin to discover other unrealized aspects; we may even find what appeared at first to be a dearth of content is, in fact, an overabundance – what the French call an "embarras de richesses." Then a new difficulty appears – how to explore all the now perceived aspects and complexities of the subject, and how to deal with the inrush of new thought-trains.

Innumerable subjects are suitable for reflective meditation, and mention can be made here only of the different categories. Psychological and spiritual qualities offer an almost endless series – courage, harmony, serenity, joy, will, and so on. Symbols constitute another type.

One can also meditate on a phrase embodying a thought. Such "seed thoughts" are, of course, also innumerable, but they can be divided broadly into two classes; first those that appear simple and obvious, but which turn out to conceal a world of meaning; second, those that are formulated in a paradoxical and therefore challenging way. These are often in the form of an apparent contradiction, the reconciliation of which lies in a higher or more comprehensive synthesis of the two opposite terms, for instance –

- "Act with interest and without interest."
- "Suffer with joy." (Which does not mean to enjoy suffering)
- "Make haste slowly." (An old Latin saying, "festina lente.")
- "Live in the eternal and in the moment."

"See action in inaction and inaction in action."

(*Dr. Roberto Assagioli*)

Technical Suggestions on Reflective Meditation

The first suggestion is never to concentrate on negative aspects but to direct the attention to those that are positive. The second is to write down immediately any worthwhile thoughts or conclusions arrived at. Concepts that seem clear and vivid at the time have a way of disappearing from the consciousness very quickly and are lost – at least temporarily – if not fixed right away. The formulation of thoughts verbally also forces us to clarity of thinking and precision, and exposes any confusion and vagueness in our minds. The process of writing is itself a stimulus to meditation, and may lead to further valuable thoughts, "flowing from the pen," so to speak. Writing in this sense is a

meditation technique; it definitely helps in keeping the mind oriented and active along the desired lines and in maintaining its focus.

The length of time to be spent on meditation varies, but to begin with it should not exceed ten or fifteen minutes; that is quite long enough. The length of period during which one subject should be used as the theme also varies, but it should not be less than a week, and after some practice one often finds a month none too long. In fact some subjects appear to be virtually inexhaustible. A good method is to meditate on certain themes cyclically, that is, a series of subjects may be listed and each one be used in turn for a week, after which the series is gone through again.

At this point the time factor should be mentioned. This is a problem that everyone comes up against. Nearly all feel that they have so much to do, their lives are so complicated, there is so little privacy today and the demands of work and family leave so little spare time or energy, that, although they realize the value of a time of meditation each day, they feel that they cannot undertake it. These difficulties are real. The whole organization and machinery of modern living take no account at all of the rights of the inner life, and so the whole trend at present is against it. But in spite of these formidable problems, if we feel the value of the inner life strongly enough and really intend to give it some time, we can usually find a way of making room in the day for at least a short meditation. Ten or fifteen minutes is not a long period to fit into a twenty-four hour program.

It is plain, however, that it is almost impossible to have ideal conditions for this in modern life, and any quiet time that we find in the day is an oasis to be taken advantage of. A good rhythm to establish is that of meditating in the same place first thing every morning, before entering into the melee of the day. Regularity is most valuable, but we should not be dependent upon such rhythm and, even if it takes longer to attune ourselves to the inner work and is more difficult, it is better to learn to do this quite independently of our surroundings. Each one of us has his own problems on this and each has to solve them as best he can.

The rewards of reflective meditation are many. First it brings increasing proficiency in using the mental tool and a growing sense of mastery of the mind. This, of course, is reached only by degrees, and we cannot expect to achieve perfection; but even a fair degree of control of the mind is gratifying and most valuable, for the mind is a bad master, but a most useful servant. Other results will emerge if we seriously undertake and continue this form of inner action, which is also a necessary preliminary step to the other types of meditation. It begins our training in this field of work and lays the foundations for all future achievement.

(Dr. Roberto Assagioli)

Receptive Meditation

Receptive meditation is a most valuable part of our mental training, but, although it may seem quite simple, it is actually the most difficult kind of meditation and one in which we are quite likely to commit mistakes. There are also real dangers attached to it and we might, therefore, feel inclined to leave it alone. Indeed, it is not advisable for everyone, but there are good reasons for training ourselves in it and adopting it as a regular part of our inner action, and so its right and safe use will be explained.

First of all we should realize how invaluable receptive meditation is and how helpful is the insight it can bring, both in our spiritual realizations and in guiding our personal lives. Second, increased sensitivity, or receptivity to "impressions" is a natural and spontaneous result of inner harmonization, and of relationship or contact with the Transpersonal Self. Third, if rightly practiced it is not only without dangers, but is of great help in avoiding the dangers of *unconscious* receptivity. This point is so important and of such constant application that it will be good to deal with it at some length.

We should start with a clear recognition that we are exposed to countless individual, group, and mass influences all the time. These last take the form of waves of excitement, of panic, or of hostility which sweep through humanity, or large sections of it, and sway or even engulf those who do not know how to deal with them. These waves or impacts, increasingly recognized today under the general term of "vibrations", may reach us through the normal channels of the senses, telepathically through psychic impressions, or from mental levels.

It is most useful – although it may shock us – to realize how much we are tools or victims of influences of which we are unconscious, or to which we yield in a passive way. An outstanding example – which can be regarded as a gigantic experiment in mass suggestion and in influencing behaviour is advertising, the effectiveness of which can be evaluated in billions of dollars. At first it was used more or less empirically, although with unconscious psychological skill; but today it is being used quite deliberately, consciously utilizing definite psychological techniques.

It might seem, therefore, that we should try to become non-receptive to outer influences, but this is not the true solution. It is practically impossible to be non-receptive and it is also undesirable. We do not live in isolation; we are intimately connected and interacting with both individuals and groups. Isolation would mean self-centeredness, and this is such an unnatural condition that it often proves painful and even unbearable. The anguish of solitude produced by isolation has been described vividly by several existentialist writers, such as Kirkegaard and Kafka.

Human relations imply receptivity, and lack of receptivity excludes love. The true solution requires clear thought and skill in action, and is arrived at through three stages of inner activity – awareness, control of mastery, and wise utilization. These functions of receptive meditation offer the best way to turn the liabilities, the mistakes, and the dangers of receptivity into assets. It is well to realize and remember that receptive meditation is a definite form of *meditation* – it is a *conscious and controlled mental activity*. It is quite different from merely psychic receptivity which opens us to influences of an emotional and imaginative character, and its mental quality enables us to discriminate between the various kinds of impression, to register them correctly and later to interpret them rightly. These points will be developed further when describing the techniques of receptive meditation. (*Dr. Roberto Assagioli*)

Stages of Receptive Meditation

As the first condition of safe receptive meditation is the ability to keep our consciousness steadily on the mental level of awareness, it should be done only after the preparation described as necessary for reflective meditation. That means we must go through the stages of relaxation, mental preparation by means of appropriate reading, dis-identification of the self from the body and the emotional life, the elevation of the centre of consciousness and the achievement of the inner attitude of the Observer. This is a condition of positive, wide-awake awareness. It is also advisable at this point to make whenever possible a short reflective meditation; this will consolidate the positive inner attitude and develop the ability to use the mind as an obedient tool.

To realize the difference between reflective and receptive meditation it is useful to consider the mind as an "inner eye", which in a certain respect it truly is. In reflective meditation the eye of the mind is directed, figuratively speaking, horizontally, trying to see beyond the apparent, or rightly interpret what has entered the field of consciousness. On the other hand, in receptive meditation we direct the mind's eye "upwards" and try to discern what is "above", on a higher level than that on which we are aware. This can also be described in terms of hearing – we try to catch some inner sound or message coming from a higher or subtler region.

Silence

This stage should be defined carefully, because there are various kinds of silence. The safe and true kind needed is a *positive* silence, that is, the maintaining of an alert inner stillness for the desired period, in which we eliminate as much as possible all the spontaneous activity of the mind.

This phase of silence is a necessary condition for receiving and registering higher influences. Someone endeavouring to reach this inner silence once wrote

of it in the following amusing way: "I was in deep meditation and knew I had reached a very clear and lucid place and like a flash came the thought: 'I know that I am in a very, real inner place and yet I am deaf and blind, seeing and hearing nothing.' Another split second and there came a sort of humouring response: 'If you were also dumb you might possibly see and hear.'"

To achieve and maintain the inner silence is a difficult task which calls for persistence and a firm determination; it is a sustained act of the will. Our psychological mechanism is not accustomed to such discipline, it resents it and tries in every way to shake it off. A flood of impressions, sensations, emotions, images, and thoughts invades the field of consciousness and a fierce fight for mastery begins. It seems we will never succeed in expelling the intruders which appear to come from every side at once. But it is not necessary to be drastic; too strenuous an effort is undesirable and defeats its own ends.

There are several techniques we can use; one is to repeat over and over a phrase or word; another is to evoke an image and keep it clear and steady at the center of the consciousness. The best words and images for this purpose are those which suggest a state of calm, of peace, or silence. An effective phrase for example (from a Hymn used in the Greek Mysteries) is: "Be silent, O strings, that a new melody may come to me." Images such as the following are helpful in stilling the mind: a quiet lake reflecting the blue of the sky; a majestic mountain peak; the starry sky in the stillness of the night.

Those who have already had some training or practice in meditation will be able to use the technique of watching the flow of the mental stream in a detached, dispassionate way, as something objective and not belonging to oneself. If we succeed in maintaining this positive watching attitude long enough the stream of emotions and thoughts becomes slower and slower until it becomes still.

An opposite condition, that of drowsiness sometimes occurs. This is to be firmly avoided because it is not conducive to the receiving of higher impressions and, instead, it may bring about a condition which is undesirable and even dangerous.

The achievement of a true inner silence is well worth the effort and the persistent training which it takes. Besides being necessary for receptive meditation it has a value of its own; it is conducive to a condition of harmony, peace, and quiet joy, and it produces a sense of expansion of consciousness; it is also essentially restful and refreshing.

Methods of Reception

When a state of silence has been reached, that is, after a period of effort and struggle to achieve silence, then we are ready for the further stage of reception. The inner attitude is one of quiet watchfulness and patient waiting; it can also be

described as a state of keen but unemotional interest in what may happen and of what we may become aware. The source from which we await impression, and to which therefore we direct our one-pointed attention, should be the Transpersonal Self. That is the sure source of true impression. But it is not the only source; impressions from other sources, if these are high and true, are often channelled or conveyed through the Self to the conscious mind.

Inner Seeing

The methods of reception are various; an impression may reveal itself to our consciousness through *seeing, hearing, contact, urge to action* and in other ways. The most frequent is perhaps through seeing or illumination. The mind is indeed symbolically an inner eye, and the symbolism of vision is often used. We speak of insight, of illumination, of "seeing" in the sense of realizing the meaning or significance of some fact or event, and we talk of "seeing" the solution of a problem and of having a "bright" idea. Sometimes an abstract geometrical figure or some other symbolic form enters into the field of consciousness. However, a series of concrete images and forms and colours may also appear, but these are the product of the imagination and are not mental in character. During receptive meditation this latter type of image should not be paid attention to or at the most can be observed quietly for a short time without undue interest.

A higher form of spiritual "seeing" can be called intuition. This word may be misleading because it has been used in different senses. Etymologically it is connected with vision, it means "seeing into." Intuition in its higher and purer sense can be considered to be a direct, suprarational understanding or comprehension of the true nature and reality of something – comprehension of its true quality, purpose, and essence. It is quite different from what are called "hunches," which are psychic impressions about people or events of a personal character and having personal interest.

Inner Hearing

The second way of receiving impressions is that of inner hearing. Here, too, we must discriminate carefully between the psychic hearing of voices and the much higher inner spiritual hearing. This discrimination is not easy and calls for a subtler sense than that needed for discriminating between images and true spiritual insight. The difference can be termed one of *quality and level*. After some practice in receptivity one becomes more and more aware of the level on which the consciousness functions. If it functions on the emotional and imaginative levels the voices heard are apt to give messages or impressions of a personal character, highly coloured with feeling of some kind.

Inspiration coming from high levels, on the other hand, is generally impersonal in character. The messages are short, incisive, and meaningful. They are generally concerned with one's spiritual advancement and will contain wise advice, perhaps pointing out some fault to be eliminated, some spiritual quality to be developed or some high aim to be attained. Sometimes the message is symbolic in character, even though the phrase may appear to have a concrete meanings Such was the case with the well-known message received by St. Francis – "Go, and restore my church." He interpreted it at first as an injunction to build up a half-ruined little church, but later he recognized that it was a command to restore the Roman Church of his time.

To this kind of impression belong also many artistic, literary, and musical inspirations. The poet or musician has the impression that something in himself or somebody else dictates them; he seems to "hear" inwardly, and the poem or idea or theme appears spontaneously in his field of consciousness. The symbol of the Muse inspiring or speaking to the attentive ear of the poet has expressed this through the ages.

Sometimes a *dialogue* is established between the conscious personality and the Self; a question put by the meditating mind receives a prompt and clear inner answer which seems to formulate itself and appear to the consciousness. If the personality comments on it and replies, a further reaction is then registered. This dialogue has been dealt with in its more general sense by Martin Buber in several of his books, and he applies it to all kinds of spiritual relationships This dialogue can be facilitated through the use of one of the symbols of the Self – that of the Old Wise Man.

Inner Contact

The third form of receptivity can be called *contact*, because it is analogous to the physical sense of touch or feeling by contact. But this expression should not be taken too literally; it corresponds to our meaning. When we say we "contact somebody," or are "in touch with someone." It does not mean that we touch the person physically, but indicates a relationship, a rapport, an easy interplay at will. The same can be said of *inner contact*, alluding specifically to the Self. It means an easy rapport or alignment with the Self which permits receptivity to its influence and awareness of its quality and nature, and gradually enables us to identify or unify ourselves in consciousness with it, however partially and momentarily.

By this inner nearness, by this "touch" of the Self, we are harmonized, vivified, recharged with energy, or with that which we specifically need at the time, and which the Self is trying to convey to us Its effects are clarifying, and enlightening; we are filled with certainty, courage, joy; we feel renewed and

ready to go back to the arena of personal life and meet its emergencies and challenges. We feel that some higher power has descended upon us and added a certain degree of blending or infusion by the Self of the radiation from superconscious levels.

Urge to Action

The fourth way in which we may receive impression from the Self is through an *urge to action*. We become aware of it as a definite urge to do something, to undertake a task or duty in some field of service, or sometimes it may be an urge toward inner action of some sort, to the changing of something in ourselves. This type of impression is what the Quakers who have practiced extensively this art of receptive meditation and silence, call "concern."

Again we need to discriminate carefully between urges coming from the Self or some high, superconscious level, and those coming from the middle or lower unconscious. The way in which they appear in the consciousness is similar, but a difference will be found in the quality and content of the urge. Whenever it takes the form of a call to a great mission or to some action of personal advantage we should regard it with suspicion. An urge of this type is normally of lower origin and is spurious and should be dismissed.

Registration

After reception comes the stage of registration. Every impression whatever its type or the way in which it is received, should be accurately and immediately registered in writing. As mentioned previously in connection with reflective meditation, the higher impressions are often vivid and clear at the moment of reception, but they have a curious tendency to disappear rapidly from the field of consciousness and if not caught and registered at once they are apt to be lost. Also, the very fact of formulating them and writing them down helps us to understand them better; sometimes during writing the impression will develop, and we will continue to receive it. Writing can, in fact, be used as a technique for evoking inspiration; it creates a convenient channel for the higher impressions. But while writing one should always remain alert and fully aware, not permitting any form of "automatic" writing, which can easily have undesirable and even dangerous effects.

Delayed Reception

Another interesting aspect of receptivity is the *delayed reception of impression*. It often seems that nothing happens during receptive meditation; we remain in a state of blankness and do not become aware of anything new except, perhaps, a sense of quiet, rest, and refreshment. But this does not necessarily mean the meditation has been useless and unsuccessful, for quite frequently some

impression or inspiration will come into our consciousness later in the day or even another day. It may be in another meditation or at some time when we are engaged in quite different activities; it may be in some moment of relaxation or on waking in the morning, but whenever it is we will recognize a connection between the apparently unsuccessful meditation and the subsequent inspiration. This connection will be evident when the answer which we sought to some question or problem flashes into our minds, but there can also be a less dramatic but equally true delayed reception of impression to which we should be alert.

Therefore, after meditation we should always keep an inner attitude of watchfulness and attentiveness – what is called, when developed, a "meditative attitude" – during the whole day. We can train ourselves to develop a state of dual consciousness, that is being normally concentrated on our outer activity while at the same time keeping a part of our attention turned toward the inner world. This is the "attitude of the Observer", watching what happens both in the outer world and on the various inner levels of life. (*Dr. Roberto Assagioli*)

Visualisation

Visualisation is the process of focusing your concentration on an image of what you want and seeing it as already having manifested. It is a way of going in into the inner recesses of your mind, and with the power of the subconscious mind, causing the manifestation of the desired object, instance or circumstance.

Visualisation resembles our familiar habits of fantasies, daydreams, and imaginations but entwines a certain discipline into them. Visualisation is not imagination, though the dividing line is very subtle. Imagination is an outward projection of the mind and has its foundation in desires and emotions.

By definition, visualization refers to the practice of seeking to affect the outer world via changing one's thoughts. Visualization is a technique of using your imagination or thoughts to visualize specific behaviours or events occurring in one's life.

Along Dr. Roberto Assagioli:

Another group of exercises are those of **visualization**. The first and most simple is that of imagining (with eyes closed) to "see" a number as if it were written on a blackboard. Beginning with a single number, the student develops his/her ability – through practice – until he/she becomes able to "see" numbers of many digits. Other subjects suitable for further visualization exercises are: coloured geometric forms (squares, triangles, circles), then three- dimensional forms (cubes, pyramids, spheres), eventually more and more complex human figures and landscapes. These exercises are also useful in offering to students: proof of the results of the training. A further step, in the case of adolescents, is that of

visualizing their ideal model – the model of what they wish to become. (*End of citation*)

The power of positive thinking together with visualization is pretty intense. I think at times the concept seems rather cosmic, strange or weird to most people, but there has been so much documentation on the subject, that one cannot dispute the concept. According to the Law of Attraction, thoughts have energy and this energy attracts like energy.

The practice of positive thinking suggests for you to observe four things: Know what you want, ask the Universe for it, feel and behave as if the object of your desire is on its way, be open to receiving it.

Creative visualization and positive thinking has the power to alter our environment, our circumstances and cause events to actually happen. It can attract money, love, success and improve health and wellbeing. It is not voodoo or magic; it is the natural process of the power of thought. Whether done consciously or unconsciously, most truly successful people have used visualization to reach their highest goals. Approach and handle daily situations positively and positive effects will be the result.

By changing our thoughts, we change our reality. Trust that if you utilize the power of visualization, even if you do not quite believe it and totally accept it, understanding and accepting it even in just theory will help you achieve.

From “Discipleship in the New Age, Volume One, Talks to the Disciples, pages 89/91, by Alice A. Bailey, Lucis Press Ltd (1966).

The power of visualization is limitless, anything is possible. The secret is no secret. All you have to do is apply it and put it into motion.

The secret of all true meditation work in its earlier stages is the power to visualise. This is the first stage to be mastered. Disciples should lay the emphasis upon this process; in it lies eventually the ability to use the creative powers of the imagination, plus mental energy, as a measure to further the ends of the Hierarchy and to carry out the Divine Plan. All the new processes in meditation techniques (for which the New Age may be responsible) must and will embody visualisation as a primary step for the following reasons:

1. Visualisation is the initial step in the demonstration of the occult law that “energy follows thought.” This, of course, everyone interested in occult study recognises theoretically. One of the tasks confronting disciples is to achieve factual knowledge of this. Pictorial visualisation (which is a definite feature of the work in many esoteric schools) is simply an exercise to bring about the power to visualise. In the work of those disciples who are being trained for initiation, this external aspect of visualisation must give place to an interior

process which is the first step towards the direction of energy. The visualising of pictures is intended to focus the aspirant within the head at a point midway between the pituitary body and the pineal gland. In that area, he draws pictures and paints scenes and thus acquires facility to see—in large and in detail—that which he desires and for which he intends to work. The visualising of what might be called “directed process” goes on in a more focussed manner and in the area directly around the pineal gland. The pineal gland then becomes the centre of a magnetic field which is set in motion—in the first place—by the power of visualisation. At that point, energy is gathered by the disciple and then directed with intention to one or other of the centres. This focussed thought produces inevitable effects within the etheric body and thus two aspects of the creative imagination are brought into play.

2. The power to visualise is the form-building aspect of the creative imagination. This process falls into three parts, corresponding somewhat to the creative process followed by your Inner Self:

- a. The gathering of qualified energy within a ring-pass-not.
- b. The focussing of this energy under the power of intention, i.e., at a point in the neighbourhood of the pineal gland. The energy is now focussed and not diffused.
- c. The despatch of this focussed energy by means of a pictorial process (not by an act of the will at this time) in any desired direction—that is, to certain centres in a certain order.

This process of energy direction can become a spiritual habit if disciples would begin to do it slowly and gradually. At first, the visualising process may seem to you to be laboured and profitless but, if you persevere, you will find eventually that it becomes effortless and effective. This is one of the most important ways in which a Master works; it is essential, therefore, that you begin to master the technique. The stages are:

- a. A process of energy gathering.
- b. A process of focalisation.
- c. A process of distribution or direction.

The disciple learns to do this within himself and later to direct the energy (some chosen and particular kind, according to the demand of the occasion) to that which lies without himself. This constitutes, for example, one of the major healing techniques of the future. It is also used by the Master in awakening His disciple to certain states of consciousness, but with these you have naught to do.

3. The power to visualise correctly is one definite mode of ascertaining truth or falsity. This is a statement difficult for you to comprehend. Visualisation is literally the building of a bridge between the emotional or astral plane and the mental level and is, therefore, a personality correspondence to the building of the bridge. The mental plane, the second aspect of the personality, is the correspondence to the form-building aspect of the Trinity, the second aspect. The creative imagination “pictures a form” through the ability to visualise and the thought energy of the mind gives life and direction to this form. It embodies purpose. Thereby a rapport or line of energy is constructed between the mind and the astral vehicle and it becomes a triple line of energy when the soul of the disciple is utilising this creative process in some planned and definitely constructive manner.

This visualising process and this use of the imagination form the first two steps in the activity of thought form building. It is with these self-created forms—embodying spiritual ideas and divine purpose—that the Masters work and hierarchical purpose takes shape. Therefore, my disciples, it is essential that you begin with deliberation and slowly to work in this manner and to use the above information constructively and creatively. The need of the times is increasingly great and the utmost of work and of purpose is desired. (*End of Citation*)

Thought is a creative material that moulds our life and attracts similar stuff into our life. Thoughts also travel from one mind to another, and if they are strong enough, they can be unconsciously picked up by people, who are in a position to help us materialize our desires and goals.

We are part of the Omnipotent Cosmic Power that has created the universe, and we therefore we participate in the process of creation. Bearing this thought in mind, there is no wonder that thoughts materialize. Stop for a moment and think – **You are an indivisible part of the great Cosmic Power!** This means that your thoughts can come true! Not all thoughts of course, but those that are concentrated, well-defined, and often-repeated often.

Thought is energy, especially a concentrated thought laden with emotional energy. Thoughts change the balance of energy around us, and bring changes to the environment in accordance with them.

There is another explanation why visualization brings results. It may come as a surprise to most, but the theory of “Maya” – Illusion, which comes from the Eastern Philosophies, provides the explanation.

According to the Indian philosophy “Advaita- Vedanta”, which is called “Non-duality” in the West, the world is not real, but only an illusion, created by our thoughts. Since most people think and repeat the same or similar thoughts often, focusing their mind and thoughts on their current environment, they create and

recreate the same sort of events or circumstances. This process preserves the same “world” and status quo. It is like watching the same film over and over again, but we can change the film by changing our thoughts and visualize different circumstances and life, and in this way create a different “reality”. For us it is a reality, though in fact it is just a dream we call “reality”.

Our thoughts and feelings, and the mental images we carry in our mind, affect our life. By changing them we change our life. This means that we have to be careful with our thoughts and how we feel about them, otherwise we might get things and enter into situations that you do not want, and then we will have to find ways to get rid of them. Better think and visualize what that we really and truly want, and which will improve our life, and the lives of others through the principle of unanimity.

Exercise of the Blossoming of the Rose

1. Let us imagine a rosebud, closed.
2. Let us visualize its stem and leaves with the bud above.

It appears green, because the sepals are closed, but at the very top a rose coloured point can be seen. Let us visualise this vividly, holding the image in the centre of our consciousness.

3. Now begins a slow movement: the sepals start to separate little by little, turning their points outward and revealing the rose-hued petals, which are still closed. The sepals continue to open until we can see the whole of the tender bud.
4. The pedals follow suit and slowly separate, until a perfect fully-opened rose is seen.
5. At this stage let us try to smell the perfume of this rose, inhaling its characteristic and unmistakable scent; so delicate, sweet and delicious. Let us smell it with delight. (It may be recalled that religious language has frequently employed perfume as a symbol, e.g., “the odour of sanctity”; and incense is also used in many religious ceremonies).
6. Let us now expand our visualisation to include the whole rosebud, and imagine the life force that arises from the roots to the flower and originates the process of opening.
7. Finally let us identify ourselves with the rose itself or, more precisely, let us “introject” it into ourselves.

Symbolically we are this flower, this rose; The same life that animates the universe and has created the miracle of the rose is producing in us a like, even

greater miracle – the awakening and development of our spiritual being and that which radiates from it.”

Through this exercise we can effectively foster the inner “flowering.”

A Meditation Outline as Example

Meditation on the Law of Right Human Relations

1. Alignment

Through

1. **Relaxation** – physical, emotional and mental

Take a little time to achieve this sequentially on each level, quietening and lengthening the breathing until a stage of inner silence and serenity is reached.

2. **Aspiration**

Here the energy of the emotional nature is brought into co-operation and harmonised with the act of meditating.

3. **Mental Concentration**

Still the mind and direct it to the quiet higher areas where you will meditate.

4. **Realisation**

That on those levels of mind you are identified with those all over the world who are using this meditation.

2. Dedication

Say aloud or silently, but with clear inner intention:

“I dedicate myself, with all men and women of goodwill, to the building of the new City of Humanity.”

3. Meditation on the Law of Right Human Relations

1. **Visualisation.** Try to visualise a symbol which depicts this law for you.

2. **Reflect** on the meaning, value and far-reaching implications of Right Human Relations

3. **Consider and Plan** how you can personally express it more fully and thus contribute to its implementation in the world.

4. **Radiate it** telepathically through:

- a. Repeating thoughtfully the word “*Right Human Relations*”.
- b. Sending forth the thoughtform you have been building in your meditation along rays of light in all directions.

4.Affirmation

“May we be helped to do our part.”

Seed Thoughts for Meditation

Introduction

Meditation is finding oneself on the road of inner vision, an indispensable discipline to be practiced. Through regularity of its practice, we eventually discover a deeper and more enriching part of ourselves within: Within You is the Power.

The art of meditation helps us to dis-identify from the thoughts, feelings and physical sensations arising from the lower self, the personality. And, by so doing, we come to the amazing realization that there exists a dimension of beingness that transcends every aspect of our everyday consciousness—for we experientially discover the “Higher Self” hidden deep within the brain.

There are several forms of meditation as we already know, each providing the meditator with a unique way into the deeper dimensions of consciousness. For many, an approach most appealing and effective.

Success of such a meditation is based upon the meditator’s heartfelt intention to seek inner union, the Secret of Secrets within oneself. The kind of meditation is largely driven by the heart, and is mystical, as within yourself only.

Love has been the way in, so to speak. Countless numbers of people have historically found such meditations to be blissfully joyous and enriching.

To be done well, mystical meditation encourages separating oneself from the outer world and the business of society in order to find the quiet solitude necessary to experience the exquisite touch of your “Higher Self within”, the loving depths of the meditative experience. Yet today there is a new and emerging form of meditation that will eventually supersede the mystical way. Though there are several names given to it, a title often used within psychology and even philosophy is *Meditation with Seed*.

Meditation with Seed has many of the essential elements found in the more mystically (if I may express myself this way) oriented forms of meditation practice. Both emphasize the importance of the heart as a gate to the “Higher

Self Within”, within your mind; both seek the place inside where the experience of expansive oneness is sensed and felt; and both help us to inwardly know that consciousness is dual, in that there is a higher and lower dimension to our beingness.

Yet beyond these points of commonality, Meditation with Seed has additional elements not found in the other. It is a practice based upon the notion that the heart *and* the mind in unison are sacred, and equally so. The love of the heart and the higher mind are both recognized as conduits through which your “Inner Higher Self” can find expression in our individual lives.

The reason that this type of meditation is entitled Meditation with Seed, is that the meditator will use “seed thoughts” as a way of preparing the mind for intuitive inspiration. Such seed thoughts can be in the form of a word, a sentence or even a question. Alternatively, it can pertain to the use of visual imagery, or the silent chanting of various mantra sounds, as the AUM (or OM) from the Hindu traditions.

All of these are essentially forms used by the mind and, when correctly applied, act as an invocation to the “Higher Self Within Spot.” In other words, at certain stages in the meditation process, these seeds create an invitation for the “Higher Self Within” to imbue the mind with intuitive insight pertaining to the seed thoughts used.

The premise behind Meditation with Seed is that the destiny of every human being is to become a creative agent on behalf of the “Higher Self Within or Power Within.” Suggested by this is the idea that the Power Within (Higher Self) seeks to express its love and wise intelligence through the personality and, in this way, make an uplifting contribution to humanity’s betterment.

Meditation with Seed is a psychological discipline that can assist the meditator in this regard. Essentially, it is a form of creative meditation. The “Higher Self Within” seeks to transmit its creative intuitions into the receptive mind of the meditator, and in this way generates mental ideations that can assist the individual in his/her efforts to serve humanity and its needs.

It can therefore be seen that Meditation with Seed is a more active meditational practice. Indeed, when seated in meditation there are periods when the mind is deliberately and purposefully engaged.

It is only the lower mind that can be a barrier and obstacle to this inner journey, not the mind in its entirety. For the higher mind is the mind of the “Higher Self Within,” and is the great source of revelation. This principle is foundational to the understanding and practice of Meditation with Seed.

This meditation technique begins the same way as does the mystical approach.....the meditator enters deeply into the stillness and expansive realm. Once in this loving and quiet place, s/he begins the contemplative phase of the process. This is done by introducing into the mind a seed thought(s) to be pondered. In this way, the mind becomes charged around the idea or theme given to it by the seed thought.

For a time, the mind contemplates upon that which is given to it. Then the meditator disengages the mind and re-enters the stillness, and “holds the mind steady the light.” A sense of vertical alignment with the “Higher Self Within” is thus felt, and the mind is held in a state of quiet receptivity.

Attracted to the ponderings of the mind, the then begins to downwardly gaze upon it, thus slowly inspiring consciousness with wisdom related to that which had been pondered. The intuitive impressions received enrich the meditator’s understanding and provides directional insight into how to more effectively give uplifting relief to those to whom s/he serves.

Meditation with Seed is an emerging paradigm at this time in human history. Though mystical meditation has served us well in the past, this emerging form of meditation is the next step in humanity’s capacity to establish meditative rapport with the Greater Humanity. It is not a form of meditation that negates the value of the mystical approach, but is inclusive of it. For this reason Meditation with Seed can rightly be viewed as heir to the mystical way and in today’s scientific approach.

The following exercise is designed to introduce you to this practice:

Choose one of the qualities in the following list (or another one you have in mind – remind yourself that each one of these qualities are potential SEED IDEAS that unfold a cosmic ENERGY within your subtle bodies):

Joy – Gratitude – Love – Will – Courage – Calm – Generosity – Humour – Compassion – Cooperation – Vitality – Simplicity – Openness – Strength – Creativity – Power – Inclusiveness – Clarity – Energy – Playfulness – Wisdom – Cheerfulness – Loyalty – Peace – Understanding – Wonder – Freedom – Risk – Truthfulness – Steadfastness.

Reflect on the quality chosen for a period of ten to fifteen minutes during meditation, and then if you wish, take a few notes in your diary.

Following collection of reflections is designed to inspire the meditator of all levels as they go along the road of self-perfection.

Three-hundred Seventy Seed Thoughts

1. Keeping my heart open to the power of love
2. I am building a new world
3. Happiness in cheerful self-giving
4. I train my mind to surrender my heart to selfless service
5. All my vital problems are vanishing away
6. I love unconditionally
7. I transform my naughtiness into selflessness
8. Once I wanted name and fame, but now I manifest true love
9. I am not anxious to be left alone
10. To solve every problem, I solve my own first
11. I step towards self-transformation
12. I am doing what I am inspired to do from within
13. To care for you, I make it a psychic realisation
14. In humbleness, I offer more of my capacities
15. Where sacrifice is, will also be my delight
16. Today I am determined to give space to the unloved ones
17. To see a face of love, it to feel a heart of peace
18. I devote myself to something or to someone
19. Hope is sweet, hope is illumining, hope is fulfilling
20. I care for neither success nor failure
21. Surrender begins not in helplessness but in acceptance
22. Uniqueness I see in others
23. Cheerfully, I get a lion's strength
24. Difficulties indicate the strength of unwanted forces
25. If pleasure is a sheer dream, then pain is also a dream
26. What I need every day, early morning, is my meditation
27. I can face this hard world everyday
28. I make the fastest progress through my enthusiasm-mind
29. The inner experience of peace, is my supreme necessity
30. Liberation means freedom of fear
31. I am self-controlled and smile at the intruding of wild temptations
32. I conquer my proud mind with humbleness
33. I now give myself a few quiet and self-giving moments
34. I am facing the world today without my own life-problems
35. I do not avoid but transform things needing transformation
36. Each time I stumble, I get up, smile and walk unerringly
37. I make the fastest progress with my enthusiasm-mind
38. The inner experience of peace is my supreme necessity
39. Liberation means freedom from fear, doubt, ignorance and death
40. I enter my heart-door with utmost joy, love and gratitude

41. I am a self-controlled smiling person at the inrush of wild temptations
42. I am accepting my defeats and failures as part of life
43. I enjoy my heart's meditation and life's fruitful action
44. Perfection is the conscious annihilation of my egocentric self
45. If I want to inspire the outer world, I secretly aspire in the inner world
46. Faith is the art of seeing, aspiration is the art of becoming without hesitation
47. I am universal in my love, the universe is becoming the picture of my own being
48. Who is the real loser? He who enjoys the superiority game
49. I am only playing the game of detachment and service
50. I am not blaming the world, but find a solution
51. I discriminate, separating the true from the false
52. I know the meaning of silence
53. Love is the only wealth I need
54. There is only one enemy, a mighty enemy, and that is doubt
55. My heart is flooded with hope
56. I have the capacity to dance, and I will dance
57. Awareness is the only thing that my mind needs
58. I travel all the time on the wings of hope and determination
59. I am loving, and therefore never grow old
60. My mind knows how to compile with problems
61. Patience is my sacred secret and victory
62. My self-confidence is my inner guidance
63. Depending my own thought-world, it will make me either a street beggar or a great king
64. My inner brain life is of paramount importance
65. I sail on my aspiration-boat towards my supreme adventure-glories
66. The way to love humanity is to meditate unconditionally
67. A poor mind complains, a rich mind is one with the rest of humanity
68. My inner and outer life are one
69. I love myself, and forbid myself to do the wrong thing
70. I live in an atmosphere of aspiration and perfection
71. My way to find inner peace is to meditate on the heart, where there is constant joy and love
72. I never give up, my meditation is my future perfection.
73. I say to my doubting mind: "no", and to my loving heart "yes"
74. I free myself from the attachment-jungle
75. Thinking of others, my heart is pleased with me

76. I meditate and meditate, always paying more attention to my meditation
77. I constantly harbour positive thoughts
78. Loving the higher life more and more, the lower life automatically goes off
79. No experience is free in the outer world; no realisation is free in the inner world
80. When I think positive thoughts, I feel that man is not, after all, so bad
81. Let me fill my vessel to the brim with good thoughts
82. A guilty consciousness does not get light or wisdom
83. I do not think of the past, but go forward with a silent mind, far away from bondage-memories
84. Inside myself, I love sleeplessly, and outside I give unconditionally
85. To increase my inner progress, I focus my attention to the self-discipline life
86. A disciplined life comes from constant practice
87. Meditation is like a flashlight, a dark room is immediately illumined
88. A life of beauty is a life of peace
89. When my peaceful heart dreams, my bliss life sings
90. My disciplined life comes only from one thing: aspiration
91. I never permit my heart's streaming tears to evaporate
92. In the silence of my mind and heart, my life's perfection is never a far cry
93. Controlling my desires is good, but better is non-attachment
94. I am bound to be washed away by a flash flood of desire
95. I give birth to thunder-noise, when I challenge pride and ignorance
96. I do not question and doubt the sorrows of the world, only I question the sincerity of my self-investigation
97. I fight against the devouring ignorance
98. Making healthy choices, perfection will be mine
99. Doubt is more to be disliked than death
100. Of what use are my achievements if I have the fear that tomorrow somebody will do better than I?
101. Doubt is the worst possible impurity in the human mind
102. Inner obedience is the conscious recognition of the higher life, meaning higher reality, higher existence
103. Today's failure, will tomorrow grow into success
104. Meditation with greatest enthusiasm, means faster progress
105. Aspiration burns away impurity and imperfection

106. Each positive thought is not only a life-cleaner, but also a distributor
107. Before your mind alters your thoughts, you can send them to change the world
108. I train my mind to obey myself, and to surrender my heart. Happiness will be my permanent property.
109. To complete my golden dream of peace, my selflessness serves in unconditional love
110. If I have expectations, I will always be frustrated.
111. Unless I aspire, I will always be compelled to remain a prisoner of bewilderment
112. When I have aspiration, I have inner courage
113. To develop a muscle I must exercise daily. As much is the art of meditation
114. Self-criticism is not the way that leads to self-perfection
115. Through conscious self-awareness alone, I reach the goal
116. One does not have to abandon the outer life, one need only to go deeper in
117. If I do not keep the appointed meditation time, then during the day I may be confronted with bitter disappointment
118. If I know and of the art of concentration and meditation, and contemplation, easily and consciously we unite the inner world with the outer world
119. There is definitely a link between my inner world and the outer worlds. I create within my brain.
120. The outer life is my body, the inner life is part of my brain
121. Service is self-expansion
122. When I serve, aspiring humanity, it is because my inner necessity commands me to serve
123. Service is self-expansion
124. Since mine is a calm and serene mind, my hope of promoting world peace shall not remain unfulfilled
125. My today's hope will be transformed into the abiding satisfaction of tomorrow
126. I am kind, I am all sympathy for each and every human being
127. Powerless is human help without forgiveness
128. My love is permanent for the world, whether it is accepted or rejected.
129. Awareness is the only thing that my mind needs
130. Perfection means constant rejection of hatefulness
131. I try to do good things while overcoming bad things

132. I am escaping from my self-created prison
133. With physical courage I take pride in breaking the world my own way
134. I must love my daily discipline life
135. Loving my goal I automatically make progress
136. If I do not breathe in life-energy, I cannot live
137. I desperately need peace – peace within, peace without
138. Becoming victim to worry, anxiety, depression and frustration, is always followed by destruction
139. Desires are truly fulfilled only when they are perfectly transcended
140. Perfect happiness is enthusiasm minus expectation
141. My vital loves to be loved
142. My heart loves so that it can be loved
143. Humility is an inner state of consciousness that feels pur joy in its expression
144. There is a great difference between humility and unworthiness
145. I must realise that there is only one way of acquiring infinite future possibilities that lies in humility
146. I devour my anxieties
147. I shall never hear the song of the inner voice if I consciously or unconsciously make friends with anxiety
148. Doubt is an unwanted force, and a slow poison
149. Why do I allow doubt to spoil the perfection of my mind
150. A doubting mind is a shameless threat to my inner tranquillity
151. Consciousness is an infinite sea of delight
152. By defying doubt, my mind is flying in satisfaction and delight
153. Realising the goal deep within leads to renewal, making my life fresh everyday
154. My strong reliance upon my own capacities is the downfall of victory
155. I am happy because I overcome all selfishness
156. Love is the source of humanity
157. I can be happy and safe only when the heart feels faster than the mind thinks
158. When outer difficulties stand in front of me, I am telling myself: “If I can meditate in spite of the opposition I will become better and stronger
159. I will not be buffeted by the strong winds of worry

160. Only a focussed mind can challenge all doubt and jealousy
161. The darkness within me dies when I invoke harmlessness
162. Obstacles are meant to be surmounted
163. I must be wise, and constantly keep my inner fears and doubts under perfect control
164. What causes my failures? Not my doubts, not my insecurity, but my unwillingness
165. I am lost when I believe in my doubts
166. Self-pity, self-indulgence and egoistic emotional cries are but one shortcoming with different names
167. I am trying to liberate the world, but I need to discover my own inner world first.
168. Meditation is an expansion of consciousness, my inner world
169. I cheerfully do what I can to serve
170. I must conquer anger
171. I must feel the necessity of perfecting myself
172. Suppression of anything is not and cannot be the answer
173. A life of pleasure and a life of suppression are equally bad
174. I am not afraid of tasting the bitterness of failure
175. The sweetness of success will before long befriend me
176. Patience is not passive, but is something dynamic
177. I am prompted to measure my service-life
178. My human pride feels that I can do everything
179. My humility does not mean that I want the world to ignore me
180. It is an exceptional privilege to have the beauty of a serene mind
181. My heart knows that meditation is the answer
182. Meditation is cultivate purity in mind and heart
183. My real self is infinitely better than what you see
184. My daily life is peopled with friends and non-friends
185. The end of all inner teaching is selfless love
186. I have countless desires, because I am constantly begging for happiness
187. Each moment I am given ample opportunity to love and serve mankind
188. I love my inner life and guidance
189. Meditation helps me mindfully to go beyond earthly circumstances
190. The world is strewn with difficulties but my Inner Pilot is the sure guide
191. Through meditation I irradiate beauty

192. Is there any human being who is not the embodiment of opposing realities?
193. I can only have peace by walking along the road of peace
194. Peace of mind cannot be obtained overnight, it demands investment in many silence years of reflective meditation
195. My loving heart is my inexhaustible wealth from inside my inner world
196. The unaspiring mind thinks that meditation is a waste of time, but it is the secret of inner blossoming
197. I am a fool if I constantly live in the physical only
198. I grow into poise, peace, light and bliss
199. I feel that on the strength of my aspiration, I am extending my own inner reality
200. My heart is a sea of love, and my mind a river of detachment
201. I have freed myself from the past. I live in constant, unending newness of life
202. By seeing the past I gain nothing. By knowing the future I gain something. By living in the presence I gain everything
203. I have two weapons: hope and despair. With hope I try to kill the stagnation of incapacity. With despair I can kill the birth of the golden future
204. Even for a fleeting second I can offer goodwill to others
205. If my aspiration is genuine, then it will save me at every moment from world's complaints
206. Peace is the most effective weapon with which to conquer injustice
207. Life's battlefield is all at peace when the sound of the mind gives way to the silence of the heart
208. In life there are many questions, but deep within the mind, the Inner Pilot, are found the solutions.
209. World peace can be achieved, revealed, offered and manifested when love replaces the love of power
210. True happiness lies in self-giving
211. Duty is painful, tedious and monotonous, but inspiring, pleasant and encouraging when it is achieved in love
212. I must accomplish everything with my heart's love and my life's respect
213. My mind is intent on my life's transformation, and am becoming as such a world-home of peace
214. For someone unaspiring work is punishment and torture; but, for someone aspiring work is a blessing and joy

215. My inner voice is my untiring guide and true friend
216. In my mind are made all decisions
217. Conscience can live in two places in the heart of truth or in the mouth of falsehood
218. Love is the secret key
219. When I do not seek to dominate, I can be happy, when I do not expect, I can be perfect
220. I must discover that my goal is within my mind, waiting to grow into its very image
221. Who told you that you are unworthy? Try to know yourself as you really are! Proudly, a perfect instrument of peace and service
222. If I want to understand myself, then I should not examine myself
223. I can love myself, and feel that constantly truth is breathing through me
224. Nothing is as beautiful in me as my heart's sincerity
225. My power of self-control is the tree of freedom
226. My self-controlled life is the guarantee to transformation
227. Every day I cultivate my will in the depths mind and heart
228. I always strive to do something unique and undoubtedly good
229. My human ego wants to do something great, grand and magnificent
230. I practice meditation because I may not always know the best way to achieve things
231. I have become imaginative, intuitive and receptive through my meditation practice
232. I am always sleeplessly on the alert as my ego-life can easily keep growing without nourishment
233. The human life itself is a strong desire to be led by the clever mind I have
234. A self-giving life is a rewarded message that lives forever on earth
235. Although it is walking in the field of discouraging experiences, I also feel that it is about to enter into the field of encouraging and satisfying experiences
236. Oneness with unaspiring people means dining with death
237. Never give any importance to the ego that wants to compete with others

238. How can I succeed? Can I not see that my mind is lost in yesterday's failures, and that I am losing my heart in tomorrow's doubts?
239. Faith in myself is like a muscle: it can be developed
240. The secret of inner success is constancy to my highest character within my brain
241. I try to explore the limits of aspiration. Just because it is difficult, I cannot say that I shall not be able to complete the Game
242. I remember for myself: never stop once I have started
243. I delete from my conscious and unconscious memory the pangs of my past failure-life
244. I do not ridicule the sad failures of others, as I too may be sailing in the same boat before long
245. I am not allowing myself to be devoured by past mistakes
246. My morning promises: today I shall not fail. My evening promises: tomorrow I shall be better
247. What my mind needs is a fresh breeze of sweet hope
248. Ambition does not know that it shows us the way to an unsatisfied greatness
249. If I can silence my mind and ask the heart to speak, then only I am heading in the correct direction
250. I do my work, creating a new world
251. I am going forward with a volcanic will-power
252. Everything is as important and indispensable. In everything, with everything, plus for everything
253. I have faith in myself. I will have a new heart of assurance
254. To make the fastest progress, I am absolutely cheerful
255. It is my heart's inner volcano-intensity that sees and feels what my "Higher Self" (within the brain) is offering and inspires me
256. My tamed mind can do anything
257. Patience is strength. I am a heart of patience, and a life of dynamism
258. I am intensely inspired in all my being to sing only one song: self-improvement
259. My life of peace is the result of my unconditional dedication to unattached service
260. Self-confidence comes into existence when I feel doing everything in accordance to the laws of nature and life
261. Every day I should try to set a personal record in my unconditioned self-giving
262. I surrender myself to the beauty of truth.

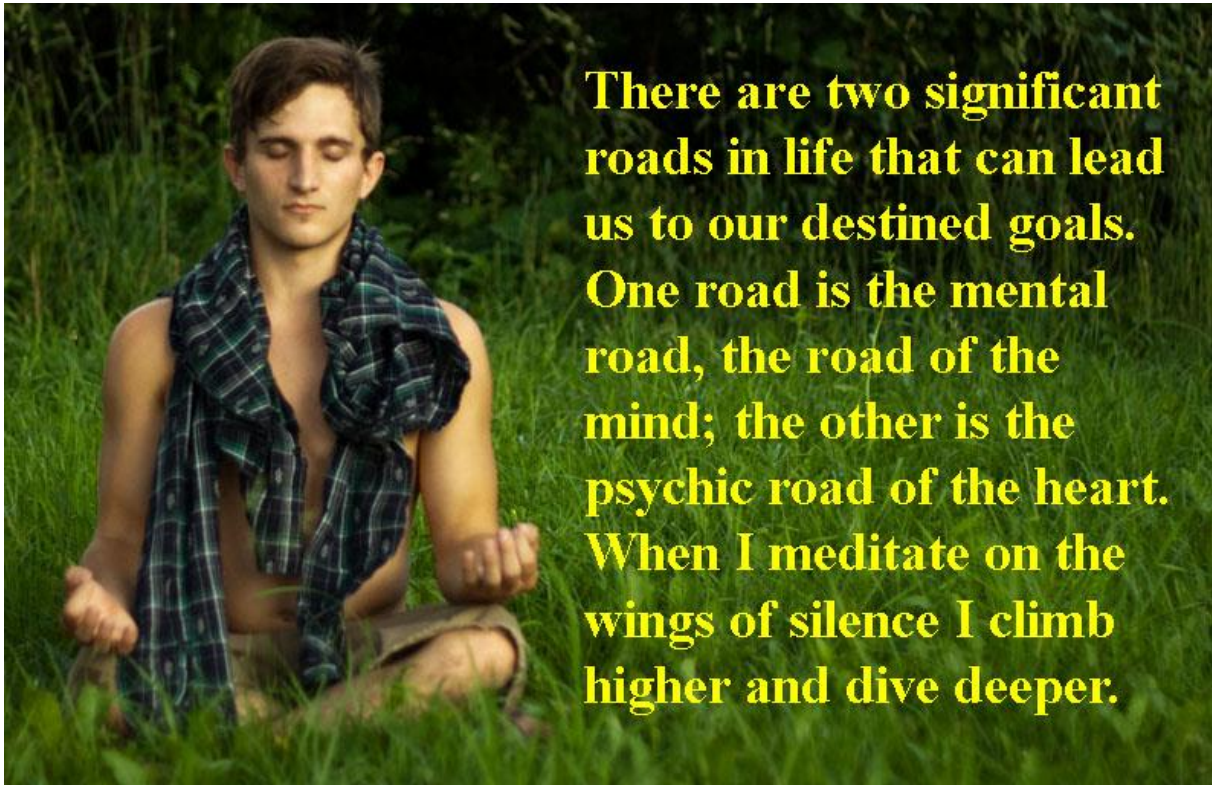
263. If I want to know the ultimate Truth, the I must go beyond the carnal mind, on the ladder of positive thoughts
264. Conscience and intuition are the brain experiences that try to protect and perfect my outer life
265. Why do I feel that I am alone?
266. Why do I feel being alone?
267. Constant expectation in one's own way is an infallible way of losing one's present joy
268. In this world, I notice that one thing alternates with another, as day alternates with the night
269. Meditation enlightens my mind, and liberates my heart
270. My heart-garden is absolutely the best place for me to meditate, and for my self-discovery
271. Knowing who I really am, all secrets of the world is an open book to me
272. Be brave within and without! Do not allow the tyranny of past memories
273. When I feel life is not giving me joy, but I feel I want joy, that means I am hungry
274. My meditation is my birthless and deathless joy
275. Psychology is not impatience.
276. Who says there is nothing to sacrifice? Our wild impatience has to be sacrificed every day, every hour, every minute, and every second
277. The life of possession constantly makes me think only of success in life
278. Three signs of progress: To do something better than I have previously done it, to maintain my standard, to have a cheerful heart even if my standard goes done
279. I am now experiencing the finite and the infinite
280. I must not let the inner sun be covered by fear, doubt, worries, anxiety, imperfections and limitations.
281. If I have the capacity to create the clouds of trouble, I can also create the sun of grace.
282. No end to sadness for him who mechanically thinks and thinks. No end to joy for him who meditates and meditates.
283. My accusing conscience, I love you because you care for me.
284. My perfection, my illumining conscience, I love you because you care for me
285. Peace meditation cannot only annihilate my mind's restlessness, but also liberate my life from the desire-night

286. I need two things: a heart that knows how to cry sleeplessly;
and, a mind that believes in self-illumination
287. If something is true, I will feel it within the very depths of
my heart
288. For me there is only one friend, and that friend is my heart's
ever-blossoming faith.
289. It takes a heroic heart to say no to the desire-world. In my
desire-life what I actually need is an endless "no"
290. If I want to fulfil my desires; then, I have to do it on my own
risk
291. Absolute honesty is very much needed to transform my
desire-night into aspiration-day
292. My life's ultimate victory depends on the surrender of my
hearts aspiration –flames
293. Every day must come to me as a new hope, a new promise, a
new aspiration, a new energy, a new drill and a new delight
294. If I have no new hope, new aspiration and new dedication in
service every single day, then where is my true awakening
295. Optimism is the secret of self-reliance. Self-reliance is the
secret of dynamic of dynamic power. Dynamic power is the secret
of immediate success
296. Every day the fear-world has fearful messages for me. But, I
am under no obligation to listen to the messages of the fear-world
297. My real joy gets only when my aspiration is genuine and
sincere
298. When I have inner joy, I see and feel myself sitting on the
inspiration throne, surrounded by the aspiration-flames
299. Only a fool thinks that he is independent. Only a fool feels
that he is indispensable
300. Only when my dynamic vital challenges the wild emotional
vital, can my mind erase my deplorable past mistakes. Only then,
in my life of aspiration, shall I feel continuous success and
progress
301. My reasoning mind must be transformed into a dedicated
world-server
302. My Inner-Self needs absolute fulfilment. It wants absolute
fulfilment among the living
303. My all-devouring vital tells me that I can whatever I want
304. I am unique
305. Permanent happiness I want. Unending sorrow I have, but I
am not afraid of the piercing dart

306. The morning is dawning with its ecstasy hours of inspiration and delight
307. Think only of your eagerness to be mindfully transformed
308. If the mind is searching and crying, it can as such raise the level of consciousness
309. Problems do not indicate man's incapacity
310. Problems do not indicate man's inadequacy
311. Problems do not indicate man's insufficiency
312. Problems indicate man's conscious need for self-transcendence in his inner world (the mind), and his conscious need for self-perfection in the outer world
313. Each difficulty is a hard examination but it increases strength
314. If my consciousness is low, immediately I can stop bad thoughts with will-power
315. From today on I shall try to have a new type of success
316. What kind of goodness is it if you keep it always on guard?
317. What kind of forgiveness is it if you keep it always unused
318. Character gives the key to open the most beautiful doors of life: peace of mind and delight
319. A confidence heart and an assurance-mind are undoubtedly two great boons.
320. The best way to seek spiritual healing is to offer gratitude everyday
321. Illness is all around. How can we (I) cure it?
322. Cry within powerfully, smile without soulfully
323. Remembrance can be painful, when I it in vain
324. Soulful happiness is my escort, therefore I shall reach very far
325. A soulful moment of powerful meditation is the answer
326. Meditation is the secret of precious progress
327. In my restless hours I meditate; in my peaceful hours I also meditate
328. I have to feel that my life of aspiration has a definite goal
329. Through meditation, slowly the mind becomes clean, and steadily the heart becomes pure (*unselfish*)
330. Face your lower nature bravely; and your higher nature is about to reach you happily, and proudly
331. If your life does not give joy to others, then how can you expect your heart to give any joy to you?
332. We have an inner existence and we have an outer existence
333. It is purity (*of thought and action*) and not insecurity that has to take possession of my heart

334. Through merciless ambition, you will remain an unfinished creation as long as you live
335. Competition is good, provided it is competition of self-transcendence and not the competition of self-demonstration
336. Ignorance makes you suffer even far beyond your imagination, even during your obscure-enjoying journeys
337. All eyes are on you when you look within through meditation, and go deep into the delight of your oneness-heart
338. When you are right, everything around you is right
339. A self-giving heart will without fail, win what it so rightly deserves
340. Do you wish to succeed enormously? Then adjust your outer mind. Do you wish to proceed confidently? Then harmonise your inner life.
341. My heart and my mind have renewed friendship
342. My heart of love shows my mind the way. My mind of peace guards my heart along the way
343. Hope is nothing but concealed power
344. Self-imprisonment begins the day we start playing with expectation-snares, but never before
345. Human nature does not change and cannot change without selfless service
346. In the world there is always somewhere a need for peace
347. If my mind still has chains of expectation, I will definitely be doomed to dire disappointment
348. Peace is my inner health
349. Deep within me is the seed of perfect perfection
350. In the vital world every day I use my ambition-mind to make my life happy
351. Failure indicates my lack of determination
352. Can I determine the distance between my known years of failure and my unknown years of success
353. Let us not worry over the future
354. Do not allow tension to stab your life if you want to succeed successfully
355. What is joy? It is a bird that we all want to catch
356. I will find no joy in my mind's cave, no matter how many times a day I enter in. Joy is where my loving, selfless heart is
357. Conscious self-examination is the most auspicious beginning of self-realisation
358. Is hell on this earth? The doubting mind has and is the only answer

359. Question your mind dauntlessly, search your heart carefully
360. In your early morning meditation, be regular, be punctual and be sincere
361. Every day collect love-flowers from your heart-garden
362. Only one quality can solve all your problems and that quality is called gratitude
363. There should never be fear in your life
364. There are only two misfortunes in life: one is that we do not know what to do, and the other is that we cannot forget what we have done
365. Dedicated, devoted, selfless service is of paramount importance
366. Relax, relax, relax powerfully. You are bound to feel an inflow of creative energy and constructive enthusiasm
367. My heart gets aspiration only when I choose the right thing to become
368. Life is arduous, but if I am sincere I will ultimately hold the banner of light and delight
369. I have an inner will, and must use it properly; using it to control my outer life. Having an outer will, I must use it to feed and please my inner life.
370. Each base thought defiles everything that is sacred in me. Each pure thought immortalises everything that is willing to change unmistakably and unreservedly.

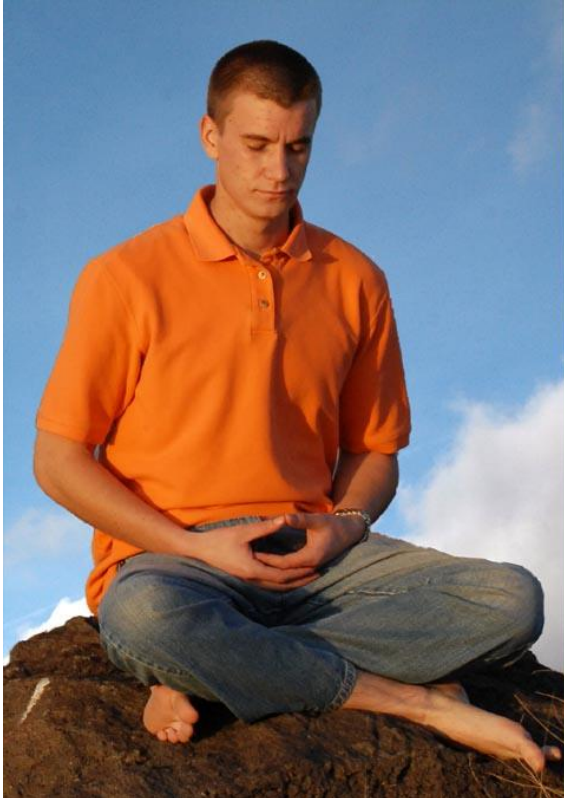


There are two significant roads in life that can lead us to our destined goals. One road is the mental road, the road of the mind; the other is the psychic road of the heart. When I meditate on the wings of silence I climb higher and dive deeper.

Meditative Techniques in Psychotherapy

From “Psychosynthesis – A manual of Principles and Techniques” by Dr. Roberto Assagioli, M.D., page 304 (Ed. 1965)

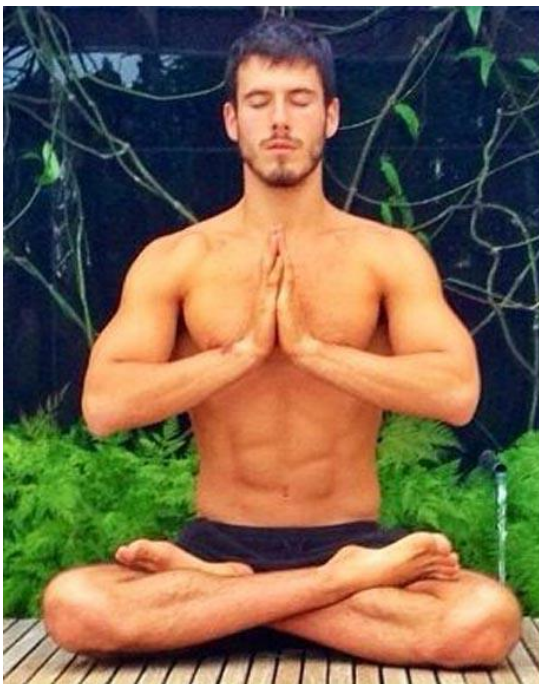
Although research evidence exists concerning the efficacy of meditation in psychotherapeutic settings, therapists and counsellors are often unfamiliar with meditative techniques and their usefulness. Those in professional fields frequently lack ways of bridging the gap between what may represent the psychic domain of life and the more pragmatic concerns typically presented by clients. This chapter presents a model that employs meditative approaches to enhance the therapy process for practitioners as well as their clients. The model is designed to provide a sequential approach to dealing with relaxation, self-awareness, inner control mechanisms, emotional felt senses, and intuition, within a nonreligious context. It is applicable to holistic and experiential perspectives on the process of psychotherapy.



Meditative Technique in Psychotherapy

The psychotherapist who wants to employ techniques of meditation must first be able to meditate himself. However, with meditation, and with psychotherapy, a study of the literature is not enough.

A personal dedication is necessary. Without it, individual practice of meditation can be dangerous; especially the advanced stages of genuine meditation. In these advanced stages, after a general bodily relaxation has been achieved, symbolic fantasies are skillfully induced. Then colours and objects are visualised.



Meditative Techniques in Psychotherapy

One endeavours to experience a symbolic representation of ideas which are understood only abstractly, of one's feelings, of friends, and finally of higher moral questions, in a way which allows the psyche to make unconscious tendencies symbolically visible. Dreams are similar to meditation, except meditation gains the reaction of the unconscious by a systematic technique which is faster than depending on dreams. But the Schultz technique only serves to raise, with a special emphasis the question, "What is the goal of meditation?"



Meditative Techniques in Psychotherapy

Schultz sees this question clearly, but that the question is basically a religious one, (and we are atheists,) or he seems at least being connected with religion. He does not conclude. Therefore, he limits himself to the formulation of “basic existential values.” This means the meditator is encouraged to strive toward a reasonable view of life oriented toward self-realisation, psychic freedom and harmony and a lively creativity.



Meditative Techniques in Psychotherapy

The technique developed by Carl Happich, the former Darmstadt internist, is meditation of the most systematic kind, and also of the widest human scope. It begins with physiology and ends in religion somehow. Happich took the level of consciousness he called “symbolic consciousness,” which seems to lie between consciousness and unconsciousness, as the point of departure for all creative production and, therefore, also for the healing process.



Meditative Techniques in Psychotherapy

How can we proceed practically? Assumed, as always, is the bodily solution which is attained systematically with the Schultz method or by more direct means. Happich placed great value in breathing as a graduated measure of the affective state which alters itself in the permissiveness of meditation. He encouraged both before and during the therapeutic session, an increasing passivity of respiration. Most men can only achieve this through progressive breathing exercises.



Meditative Techniques in Psychotherapy

After some experience with physiological reactions to breathing exercises has been gained, the first psychological exercise, the so-called “Meadow meditation,” can be attempted. The meditator must repeat to himself the words of his meditation-master and imagine that he (the meditator) leaves the room, goes through the city, over the fields, to a meadow covered with fresh grass and flowers, and looks upon the meadow with pleasure. Then, he psychically returns the same way to the room, opens his eyes, and relates what he has experienced. When this exercise can be done freely (which usually requires a number of sittings) it is followed by the “Mountain Meditation.”



Meditative Techniques in Psychotherapy

The meditator, as in the first meditation, goes into the country and then slowly climbs a mountain. He passes through a forest, and finally reaches a peak from which he can view a wide expanse. In the third step, the “Chapel Meditation” is explored. In it, the meditator passes through a grove and reaches a chapel which he enters and where he remains for a long time. Lastly, Happich has the meditator imagine himself sitting on a bench by the old fountain listening to the murmur of the water. What does it all mean? One who is familiar with dream symbolism knows immediately that the three central symbols (meadow, mountain and chapel) to which the meditator is led have an archetypal significance.



Meditative Techniques in Psychotherapy

The “archetypal” significance even though in everyday life, they are quite ordinary and in no way help to bring about an especially deep knowledge. However, when a certain depth of meditation is attained, such symbols lose their ordinary meaning and their symbolical value is slowly revealed. As the meditator returns to the meadow, he does not experience things as he would in the ordinary world. Rather, the meadow provides a symbol of the hypnotic level of consciousness and stimulates the emotions on this level. The individual takes an ordinary situation as the means of experiencing the primordial content of the symbol of the meadow. The meadow presents youthful Mother Nature in her serene and beneficent aspect.

Every healthy man has in his psychic depths something corresponding to his meadow. He retains within him an active and creative “child”. When a man is

psychically sick, this “child” loses its positive and creative power. As the realm of this “child” is revealed through meditation on the symbol of the meadow, the meadow becomes a point of departure and crystallization for other symbols related to this psychic realm. These self-crystallised symbols are unmediated expressions of the individual’s adaptation to the realm of the “child” within the psyche. A healthy man will have a satisfying experience of a meadow in the flush of Spring. He will populate the meadow with children or with the form of an agreeable woman. He will, perhaps, pick flowers and so on. In this way, the meditator discovers a symbolic representation of his psychic condition.

The psychically ill find it impossible to visualise a fresh meadow and during meditation cannot find one. Or the meadow may be seen as wilted or composed of a single stump. Or all sorts of disturbing, negative symbols may be scattered around. From such manifestations of illness, one gains a diagnosis which must then be translated into a therapy. Often, the meditation must be repeated many times until the crippling effects of the fundamental psychic problem are undone and the meditation can proceed normally. Analytic conversation with the psychotherapist normally aids the whole process;

In climbing the mountain, the meditator will generally symbolize some obstacle in his way so that he must prove himself. Climbing in this psychic sphere always implies “sublimation”, in the Jungian rather than the Freudian use of the term. The words transformation, spiritualization, or humanization might convey the idea better than the word “sublimation;” In any case, the climbing is a symbol of a movement during which man demonstrates his capacity to develop toward the goal of psychic freedom, the peak of human being. The passage through the forest on the way up the mountain gives the meditator the opportunity to reconcile himself with the dark, fearful side of nature.

With the symbol of the chapel, the meditator is led into the innermost rooms of his psyche where he faces the simple question of how he relates to the possibilities of psychic transformation within man. When the meditator is able to comprehend the symbolic significance of the chapel, he can learn to use it to uncover and face in himself the central problems of human life. The chapel also provides a stage on which the resolution of these central problems can be symbolically revealed. It is Happich’s idea that the religious function” is the most intimate and not an invisible factor in human life. Further, he believed that man, if he will be really healthy and psychically free, sometime and somehow must face these questions. One cannot avoid the fact that the special efficacy of Happich’s therapy was the result of his religious attitude; he developed a Christian meditation (*that was long ago, today we are thinking more scientifically*).

That his system of meditation is based on sound psychological principles is confirmed by the work of the Jungian school. Dreams have been recorded where a mountain is seen in a landscape and on the mountain stands a church. Such symbolic pictures have been valued psychically as an indication of the end of the process of “Individuation”, as a symbol of the attainment of “spirituality” (*psychic*). But in meditation one does not wait until the needed symbols are produced spontaneously, as during dream analysis; rather, the meditator is forced to occupy himself with certain symbols selected by the therapist until he has explored the fullness of their meaning.

Happich directed his meditators to a higher step which he called “Design for Mandala”, a Sanskrit word literally meaning circle, but more specifically an abstract design used especially in Tibetan Buddhism as a stimulus during meditation. The design which is meditated upon is a kind of condensation, an abstraction of many symbols which are united into a generalised form. In the course of these meditations on these designs, the meaning of the inherent symbolism can become obvious. With mandala meditation, the goal is not the production of extensive fantasy, but rather a lively mediation revolving around the central meaning of the design. Eventually, the meditator is directed to psychically identify himself with the symbol and to integrate the meaning of the symbol with his psychic life.

Properly speaking, these designs are not used as a technique of therapy, but rather in furthering the highest development of personality. As example of what can be experienced through meditation on a design can be read in the opening of Goethe’s *Faust*, where Faust beholds the design of the macrocosmos.

A still more abstract form of meditation is “Word Meditation,” directed toward unfolding the central human importance of a word or a saying. Meditation on designs and words are of the greatest importance in furthering philosophical development.

Happich holds the healthy principle of the equality of rational and irrational activity during the course of meditation.

On the other hand, one should not meditate on symbols or designs which stimulate dangerous negative emotions, or for example, a snake or scorpion. The subject of meditation should be purified through thousands of years’ experience of the wisest men, and be of proven value as is the case with many Egyptian, Hindu, and German symbols and also the holy symbols of the Greek church. The first requirement of such symbols is the impression of their positive transforming power, which can be regulated by man’s psyche.

The psychotherapy as above is based on Psychosynthesis, founded in 1910 by the Italian psychiatrist Dr. Roberto Assagioli, MD whose work was far ahead of

its time. Assagioli was one of the pioneers of Freud's psychoanalysis in Italy, but he maintained that Freud had not given sufficient weight to the "higher" aspects of the human personality (will, imagination, and intuition ...). Assagioli recognized a need for a more inclusive concept of humanity and a system (which he called Psychosynthesis) that would help humans come together within themselves as well as with each other and their world. He included even our spiritual side, our higher aspirations, and our centre, which he called the Self.

From this beginning Roberto Assagioli – and an increasing number of psychotherapists, educators, physicians, social workers, clergy, and others – worked to develop and refine this inclusive view of human growth. It is an exciting task that continues today – and will never to be finished. Each year, new discoveries in psychology, new developments in education, religion, anthropology, physics and other disciplines, add to the principles and to the techniques of Psychosynthesis. Psychosynthesis, by its very nature, is always open to new approaches to human development.

Nowadays, people use Psychosynthesis as a way of life – and in a wide variety of fields, such as education, psychology, business, and even spirituality.

We all can enhance our development, live a more centred life, have freer use of will, and enjoy a greater sense of mutual responsibility and caring.

Psychosynthesis offers tools for many purposes: embracing opposite parts of our inner worlds, enriching each other with our differences, making groups and organisations function with greater purpose, and enjoying a respectful interchange with the world that envelops us. The main goal of the broad-ranging theory and methods of Psychosynthesis is to enhance the full range of human experience and support our movement toward Self-realisation.

In a basic sense psychosynthesis (little "p") is simply a name for the process of human development: the natural tendency to harmonize or synthesize the various aspects of ourselves at ever higher levels of organization. We are like the rest of the world and all living things in that we have within us a drive to grow or evolve, to become fully realized. Also, Psychosynthesis (big "P") is a name for our conscious cooperation with this natural process of development. As such, Psychosynthesis offers :

1. A conceptual understanding of the nature of human advancement.
2. Practical techniques to help us cooperate effectively with this process.

An inclusive and ever-growing framework for the unfolding of individuals, groups, and the planet.

A Synthesis of Many Traditions

Any comprehensive psychological and educational approach to the development of the whole person must draw from many traditions. Eastern and Western traditions, for example, come together in Psychosynthesis. While Eastern disciplines often have tended to emphasize the spiritual side of being, Western approaches usually have focused on the personality level. Psychosynthesis thinking and skills help us recognize that we have a “transpersonal” essence, something greater than our “ordinary” selves. We know our purpose in life is to use all our parts and powers to manifest this essence, or self. At the same time, we want to experience this Self as fully as possible in the world of everyday existence – we want to be fully present in our personal and social lives. We humans need to view our humanity as a single whole and accord each aspect its due importance. Over the years, a number of conceptual points and a number of methods have proven themselves to be fundamental. These provide a working structure for Psychosynthesis. Prime examples are Dr. Roberto Assagioli expansive “Oval” diagram (or “Egg” diagram) showing the areas of the psyche, or mind, and his “Star” diagram, a picture of our main psychological capabilities or functions.

Stages in Psychosynthesis

Every person is a distinct individual, and the psychosynthesis of each person follows a unique path. Still, the overall process of psychosynthesis can be divided into two stages:

- In the personal psychosynthesis stage, our personality integrates around the personal self, and the individual attains a satisfying, “healthy” level of functioning in terms of work, relationships, and general living.
- In the transpersonal psychosynthesis stage, we learn to stay aligned with the transpersonal self; to bring into play transpersonal energies, such as responsibility, the spirit of cooperation, a global perspective, love, and purpose; and to listen for inner guidance and wisdom.

Often the two stages overlap: We can begin our transpersonal awareness and action long before our personal integration is complete.

Psychosynthesis Methods

Any method that assists in the evolution of a human being is useful in psychosynthesis. To be as effective as possible in guiding ourselves or others, we clearly need to have a broad range of methods and techniques to meet the needs presented by different situations and people. We treat each person as an individual and choose the methods best suited to each person’s existential

situation, psychological type, goals, desires, and path of development. We commonly use a wide range of methods in the process of talking about life events. These methods include guided imagery, movement, gestalt techniques, self-identification, creativity, meditation, will development, symbolic art work, journal keeping, development of intuition, and many more. The emphasis is on fostering our own or our client's on-going process of growth in order to experience ever more joy, balance, and actualization in life.

Will and Free Choice

As this process goes on, we gain freedom of choice, the power of decision over our actions, and the ability to direct many of our personality functions. We develop the “personal will,” the will of our personal self. We free ourselves from habits of helplessness. We drop pre-programmed reactions – to our inner impulses or to the expectations of people around us. We become gradually more “centred” and able to follow our own path, guided by our inner knowing, or true self. As we reach toward experiencing the transpersonal Self, we liberate new strengths: we encourage synthesizing energies that organize and integrate our personality. We make ever-increasing contact with our “transpersonal will,” the Will of our transpersonal Self, which provides clearer and clearer meaning and purpose in our personal lives and our social tasks. We become able to function in the world more serenely and effectively, in a spirit of cooperation and good will. Psychosynthesis is a powerful and effective mode of holistic therapy and is gaining recognition in the psychological and therapeutic world. It is also a positive and dynamic framework from which to view the evolution of our planet. As people use Psychosynthesis principles and techniques effectively in education, medicine, politics and business they are spreading them to a wider audience, developing a broader range of techniques, and discovering greater depth of understanding.

The “Egg” Diagram: Picturing Your Psyche

Dr. Assagioli original “oval” or “egg” diagram offers a view of the human psyche in its many aspects. We can imagine our minds and knowledge as having several levels:

- **The lower unconscious** – the arena of repressed and traumatic memories, fundamental drives and impulses, and elementary psychological functions.
- The middle unconscious – similar to our ordinary waking consciousness and easily accessible.
- The higher unconscious – the elements of “transpersonal” experience that connect us to others, to the larger universe and the world of spirit.

- The collective unconscious – defined primarily by Jung as the unconscious that carries archetypal experiences, the communal knowledge humans share with other humans all over the globe and through the ages.

Dr. Roberto Assagioli indicated the varying levels of unconscious with dotted lines, illustrating that these states are not rigid: they blend into each other. The same is true for the field of consciousness at the centre: we can refocus our awareness from moment to moment. The Self, in this map, describes both the “I”, (a centre of awareness and choice operating at the ordinary personality level) and the Higher Self (the centre of awareness and choice in touch with the transpersonal dimension – our larger experiencing of others, the universe, and spirit).

Glossary of Meditation Words

Meditation has a language and culture of its own. There are key concepts and terms you must know if you want to practice meditation seriously. These terms are ancient, and often have multiple roots.

Meditation has seen a magnificent global revival in recent years. But this form of healthy living is ancient knowledge. It has Tibetan, Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain roots at the very least. There may be numerous more influences which have been lost in the annals of history. For your benefit, we’ve put together a comprehensive glossary of sixty terms you need to know when it comes to meditation. Contrary to popular opinion, meditation is not just a set of mental exercises. It is spiritual, religious, and philosophical. It is a way of life.

The Glossary includes Terminology used in various Religions; Legends, Mythology, Esotericism for Information

Abstract ideas Embodied thoughts of the divine mind, carrying the energy of their creator and consequently the cause of phenomenal effects in the three worlds.

Abstraction (right) A mental activity, an attitude of mind which affects primarily the entire life-attitude of the personality. It involves not only the detachment from long habit, but it involves also a complete readjustment of the entire threefold person to the world of souls.

Abstract mind The interpreting agent for the Monad, and the lowest aspect of the Triad; the pattern-building facility, or the mind that works with the blue prints upon which the forms are modelled; the intuition or pure reason.

Abstract thought A function of the Self-expressing itself through the higher mental or causal body.

Active intelligence The energy which animates the form aspect and which creates forms in line with the subjective purposes of the presiding intelligence — God or man, human or divine, the third ray energy.

Adept A Master of Wisdom who, having traversed the path of evolution and entered upon the final stage of this Path of Initiation, has taken five of the initiations and passed into the fifth or spiritual kingdom, from the fourth or human kingdom.

Ageless Wisdom Ancient body of spiritual teaching underlying all the world's religions as well as scientific, social and cultural achievements. First made available in writing to the general public in the late 1800s by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and in the 20th century by Alice A. Bailey. Also called "Ancient Wisdom."

Agni Lord of Fire and one of the oldest and most revered gods in the Vedas. Symbol of the mental plane — the fires of mind or manas.

Agnichaitans The devas who construct and build in matter of the densest kind in connection with logoc manifestation. They function on the seventh subplane of the cosmic physical plane, and are the producers of the greatest concretion. In the planetary body of our planetary Logos, the agnichaitans are the builders of the earth, His densest form, and throughout the entire solar system they are the sum total of that activity and vibration which demonstrates what we call the "solid substance."

Agnishvattas The builders on the fifth or gaseous sub plane of the cosmic physical and, from the human standpoint they are the builders of the body of consciousness per se. From the psychic standpoint of occult psychology, they have a close connection with the physical brain, the seat or empire of the Thinker.

Agnisuryans The builders on the sixth sub plane of the cosmic physical plane, our systemic astral plane. They represent the sympathetic nervous system in the logoc physical body.

Air Air is the symbol of the higher life in which the Christ principle dominates, in which freedom is experienced and the soul comes to full expression.

Akasha (1) Sanskrit root "kas" — to radiate or shine. Higher correspondence of ether and relates to the substance which is Buddhi. (2) Vitalized matter, or substance animated by latent heat. The akasha is everywhere, in it we live and move and have our being.

Akashic Records: Records of all karmic action "impressed" upon the ethers. Most psychics perceive the distorted reflections on the astral plane.

Alignment (Occultly) means that a lower state has been brought into contact with something still higher; correct, unimpeded relationship; the establishment of a direct channel, not only between the one source, the Monad, and its expression, the purified and controlled personality, but also between the seven centres in the human etheric vehicle.

Alta Major centre The nerve centre at the top of the spine where the cranium and the spine make approximate contact; the synthesis of that which might be called nervous energy. It is the physical correspondence to the antahkarana on higher levels.

Angel See "Deva".

Angel of the Presence The devic aspect of the "causal body" of a person. The Soul whose nature is love and light and inclusive understanding.

Antahkarana (also Antaskarana) Path or bridge between higher and lower mind, serving as a medium of communication between the two. Built through meditation / visualisation, service to humanity and study of occultism. Connects the threefold personality and the Spiritual Triad. The Antahkarana embodies the response of the consciousness within the form to the steadily expanding range of contacts within the environing whole. It is built by the aspirant himself in mental matter and is the first creation of the soul-infused personality acting as a unitary being.

Appearance Expresses that which we call matter, or form, or objective expression; it is that illusory tangible outer appearance which is animated by life. This is the third aspect, the Mother, overshadowed and fertilized by the Holy Ghost, or Life, united with intelligent substance.

Archetype The original pattern or model; the prototype; "Archos" means first and "typos" means model; a perfect example; the blue print, the basic pattern,

smelling is the faculty of keen perception that eventually brings a person back to the source from whence they came, the archetypal plane, the plane where their true home is to be found; forms originate upon the archetypal planes, through the agency of divine thought, and from thence (through directed streams of intelligent energy) acquire substance as they are reproduced upon each plane, until eventually (on the physical plane) the form stands revealed at its densest point of manifestation.

Ashram A centre to which the Master gathers aspirants and disciples for personal instruction and where nothing of the personality is allowed to enter. The state of consciousness of a spiritual group.

Ashrams of Loving Intent Ashrams closest to the aura or periphery of Shamballa.

Aspect Expression; that of which quality is an emanation.

Aspirant That overshadowing spiritual soul which is aspiring to service. As he begins to comprehend a planned service activity, as he begins to contact Divine Purpose and to formulate that purpose into plan, a plan which will take many incarnations to play out, a plan which is his contribution as soul to the life and affairs of the One in whom he lives, moves, and has his being. As he does this he pierces the periphery of the ashram and moves just inside, taking up his particular place and function as a probationer within the ashram, entering into that network of spiritual relationships which constitute his subjective group.

Aspiration From the Latin "ad" — to and "spirare" — to breathe, to breathe towards. Aspiration must precede inspiration, a burning desire and a fiery determination.

Astral Emotion; sentient reactions.

Astral body The emotional or feeling body. Watery in nature and the seat of our desires. One of the most difficult bodies to control.

Astral plane Simply a name given to that sum total of sentient reactions, of feeling-responsiveness, and of emotional substance which humanity has created. The plane of the emotions, including the polar opposites such as hope and fear, sentimental love and hate, happiness and suffering. The plane of illusion.

Astrology Essentially the purest presentation of occult truth in the world at this time because it is the science which deals with those conditioning and governing

energies and forces which play through and upon the whole field of space and all that is within that field.

Atlantis A continent now submerged in the Atlantic ocean, according to occult teaching and Plato. Home of the Atlantean or fourth root race.

Atma Universal spirit. The divine Monad. The seventh principle, so-called in the septenary constitution of man.

Atman Man's originating source; the essential immortal "spark" or divine essence.

Atom Part of the greater whole; a centre of energy or electric force; a living entity; a little vibrant world.

Aura A subtle or invisible essence or fluid which emanates from human and animal bodies and even things. It is psychic effluvium, partaking of both mind and body. It is electro-vital and electro-mental. Etheric, astral, mental bodies. The sum total of the attractive forces in the field of individual activity; the quality of a sphere of radiatory activity (see Magnetic Aura).

Avatar A special emissary of Light and Love that incarnates for the benefit of humanity, having technically no karmic obligation to incarnate. There are many types of avatars, from the earthly to the cosmic. One who has a peculiar capacity (besides a self-initiated task and a pre-ordained destiny) to transmit energy or divine power, and who is capable of reflecting some cosmic Principle or divine quality and energy which will produce the desired effect upon humanity, evoking reaction and producing needed stimulation.

Beauty is, after all, as much of divinity as can be expressed in any one form.

Being Awareness, self-consciousness and self-expression, and of this the head and brain are the exoteric symbols.

Black magic The use of power and the manipulation of matter for selfish ends. Materialistic focus of forces that negate the evolutionary urge. The moment that there is the least tendency on the part of a group, or of an individual in a group, to force an issue, to bring so much mental pressure to bear that an individual group is helpless under the impact of other minds, you have what is called black magic.

Bliss The nature of the spirit; the consummation of which the Monad bestows upon the initiate.

Bodhisattva Literally, "He whose consciousness has become intelligence or buddhi." Those who need but one more life to become perfect buddhas. Name of office Lord Maitreya, known in the west as the Christ. The World Teacher is the Master of Masters and teacher of angels and humanity.

Brahma The third aspect of the Hindu trinity — Siva (father / ray 1- will), Krishna (son / ray 2 - love) and Brahma (mother / ray 3 - intelligence)

Brain The brain is like the eye of the soul, looking out into the physical world, in the same sense the soul is the eye of the Monad, and in a curious and occult sense, the fourth kingdom in nature constitutes on our planet, the eye of the planetary Deity.

Brotherhood An expression of the relation which the planetary Logos (on the cosmic mental plane) bears to His personality as it expresses itself through the planet with all its forms of life, upon the cosmic physical plane. This relationship is focussed through Sanat Kumara Who is the individualised mind of that great Life, the relation between forms, the manifestation of the unity of Life.

Buddha One Who is "enlightened" and has attained the highest degree of knowledge possible for humanity in this solar system. Last Avatar of the age of Aries. Previous World Teacher who historically manifested through the Prince Gautama around 500 BC. The Embodiment of Wisdom, he currently acts as the "Divine Intermediary" between Shamballa and Hierarchy.

Buddhi (1) The Universal Soul or Mind; the spiritual soul (the sixth principle) and therefore the vehicle of Atma, the Spirit, which is the seventh principle, the unifying principle of groups. (2) Buddhi is the Buddhic Plane, the 4th plane of perception of pure intuition, reason or true Love, and the state that all humanity is evolving toward.

Buddhism A rational, deep and sophisticated approach to human life which does not emphasize something eternal but rather emphasizes personal responsibility for inner development.

Causal body It isn't really a body, objectively or subjectively, but is the centre of Egoic or Soul consciousness, formed by the conjunction of buddhi and manas. It is relatively permanent throughout our long series of incarnations, but is destroyed after the 4th initiation is reached and we have achieved mastery over the three lower worlds. This body is, from the standpoint of the physical plane, no body, either subjective or objective: the centre of the egoic consciousness and is formed by the union of buddhi and manas, or Love and

Mind; relatively permanent and lasts throughout the long cycle of incarnations, and is only dissipated after the fourth initiation, when the need for further rebirth on the part of a human being no longer exists.

Centre and periphery The closer one gets to realization, the clearer becomes the concept that the point at that centre and the periphery are one.

Centre, head The dynamic Agent of the extra-planetary Purpose, the expression of the divine planetary Will as focussed in Shamballa. This is the energy of synthesis, the source of all planetary life; it connotes essential Being.

Centre, heart The Agent of the Plan of evolution. This is the expression of divine Love or pure Reason, the Hierarchy. It is essentially the energy of Attraction, the kingdom of souls.

Centre, throat The agent of all three Aspects in relation to the three subhuman kingdoms in nature, the expression also of the divine Intelligence, Humanity. This is the centre of the active mind and makes humanity the macrocosm of the microcosm, the three subhuman kingdoms. Humanity is to these kingdoms what the Hierarchy is to the fourth kingdom in nature, the human kingdom.

Centres Whirlpools of force that swirl etheric, astral and mental matter into activity of some kind; force vertices in matter which demonstrate as activity; centres of existence.

Centres, three planetary A closer linking of the three divine centres (Shamballa, Hierarchy, Humanity) so that the flow of divine energy will be increasingly unimpeded, and Purpose, Plan and their precipitation upon the physical plane will be precipitated. These three centres are closely interrelated and must be thought of as expressions of divine livingness, as embodying three stages in the unfoldment of God's plan, and as constituting the three magic centres — heart, head and throat — in the body of the One in Whom we live and move and have our being.

Chain Seven "chains" of evolution within a planetary "scheme". There are seven "globes" of evolution within a planetary chain.

Chakra Sanskrit - "wheel or disc". An energy centre within one of the subtle bodies, formed by the intersection of many "nadis" or strands of etheric substance, forming the seven main chakras of the human being and the 22 minor chakras. There are also 343 "points of light" which correspond to the acupuncture points. Chakras can be energy centres in the solar system or the cosmos, or a human being.

Chela A "disciple" or pupil of a spiritual teacher or Master.

Chohan Lord, Master, a Chief, an Adept. A 6th degree initiate, a "Master of the Wisdom". A custodian of one of the seven rays.

Christ The World Teacher of humanity and angels alike, head of the Spiritual Hierarchy. The Master of Masters. Embodier of the 2nd or Love aspect of Deity. Known as Maitreya in the East. Set to "reappear" to fulfil His mission started 2000 years ago.

Christ and Buddha Together, the two sons of God — the one in the east and the other in the west — present to humanity a complete and perfect representation of Deity.

Civilization The reflection in humanity of some particular cyclic influence, leading to an initiation; the reaction of humanity to the purpose of any particular world period; concerns the masses and the racial consciousness, while either culture concerns the individual and the unseen spiritual.

Chohan A Lord, Master, Chief, an Adept, an initiate Who has taken more initiations than the five major initiations which make the initiate a Master of the Wisdom.

Clairaudience Hearing on the astral plane. It means the ability to hear sounds of the astral plane. It is a faculty that demonstrates throughout the entire astral body, and a person hears all over their vehicle and not only through the specialized organs, the ears, the product of physical plane action and reaction. This would necessarily be so, owing to the fluidic nature of the astral body.

Colour The form assumed by force of some kind when that force is moving at a certain measure and when its actions and movement is impeded or unimpeded by the material through which it plays; originally, "colour" meant a "covering" (from the root "celare" — to cover or hide).

Co-measurement Understanding what is great and what is small; what is distant and what is near; what we can attain and what we would be fools to attempt. A true sense of proportion.

Compassion Love in action, fellowship in suffering; the right use of the pairs of opposites; an expression of the spiritual light in humanity; the Law of Compassion is the certainty of right relationship, of loving understanding, of actively expressed love.

Concrete Mind The form-building faculty; thoughts are things.

Conditioning (Occultly) concerns the response innate and inherent, of matter or substance to the pattern; conditioning provides the influence and the conditions wherein the best in the race can flower forth to a state of perfection.

Conscience The exercise of the discriminative sense, developed as the mind assumes increasing control.

Consciousness Comes from the two Latin words "con" - with, and "scio" - to know; literally, "that with which we know," the reaction of active intelligence to the pattern.

Contact The recognition of an environment, an area of the hitherto unknown, of that which has somehow been evoked, of a something other which has made its presence felt.

Contemplation An activity of the soul, detached from the mind, which is held in a state of quiescence; the turning of the soul light upon that which is to be known or investigated; the lull between two activities.

Cosmic Intermediary A term given to the etheric body, which is part and parcel of the universal ether. It is thought the etheric body that all the energies flow, whether emanating from the soul, or from the sun, or from a planet. Along those living lines of fiery essence pass all the contacts that do not emanate specifically from the tangible world.

Creativity is a consequence of a particular state of mind and a specific state of being; it signifies a point in evolution wherein the disciple is definitely radioactive. He can no more help creating in some form or another than he can help living.

Crisis Point of examination as to strength, purpose, purity, motive and the intent of the soul; such a point evokes confidence when surmounted, and produces greatly expanded vision; crises are points which foster compassion and understanding, points which release the light of wisdom within the field of knowledge and the world is thereby enriched.

Culture The approach of two ways — feeling and mind, sensitivity and thought; the attitudes which will enable the individual to live as an intelligent, subjective being in a tangible physical world (see Civilization).

Cycles The ebb and flow in individual and group experience; the periods in a cycle that are of real significance are "the termini" and "those where overlapping and merging occurs." At the points of merging cross-currents occur creating chaotic conditions. At the middle part of a cycle the incoming vibration stabilizes, and calm and apparent equilibrium results (see Crises).

Death is an act of the intuition transmitted by the soul to the personality and then acted upon in conformity to the divine will by the individual will' the will-to-harmonization; is undertaken at the direction of the Ego, no matter how unaware a human being may be of that direction; it is the call of the soul too strong to resist; a work or act of restitution; a process of at-one-ment (see Principle of Liberation)

Desire The force of the form nature; the reflection or distortion of love; attachment in some degree or another; a generic term covering the outgoing tendency of the spirit towards form life.

Detachment The freeing of the soul from the thralldom of the form life, and the subordination of the personality to the higher impulses.

Deva (Angel) An angel; a god; a celestial being, whether good, bad, or indifferent. Devas are divided into many groups and are called not only angels and archangels, but lesser and greater builders; the builders of the system; Devas are on the evolutionary path, on the upward way; the building devas are the Universal Mind. They not only embody the Divine Thought but are that through which it manifests, and its actuating activity. They are essentially motion. The lesser builders are more particularly the material form which is actuated, and in their cohorts are the substance of matter, considering substance as that which lies back of matter. In Sanskrit, a resplendent deity. Responsible for building all forms, from nature to the solar system, which consciousness uses as a vehicle — from a flower, to a human being, to a planet. The building devas are the Universal Mind.

Devachan A state of consciousness, reflecting, in the life of the personality, that higher state which we call nirvanic consciousness, and which is brought about by egoic action; consisting of mental matter, might be regarded as a centre, or heart of peace, within the periphery of the sphere of influence of the mental unit within the causal body.

Dharma That which one must fulfil as an incarnate Being. One's duty as an understanding of the Law. Divine law, ethical doctrine — justice, harmony, virtue.

Dhyani Buddhas The 5 Buddhas — Vairocana, Aksobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha and Amoghasiddhi. Same as Kumaras. See "Kumara".

Disciple One who is pledged to serve humanity, who is beginning to comprehend group work; who realizes the Life or force side of nature; who is transferring his consciousness out of the personal into the impersonal; who realizes his responsibility to all units who come under his influence and to the Whole.

Disciple (Function of) The function of a disciple is to focus a stream of energy of some special kind upon the physical plane where it can become an attractive centre of force and draw to itself similar types of ideas and thought currents which are not strong enough to live by themselves or to make a sufficiently strong impact upon the human consciousness.

Disciples *Initiated disciples* have no interest in anything but the vision, the Plan and its direction and materializing on earth. *Accepted disciples* are learning this and in the meantime have to react to the vision in what might be called a second hand manner; they are occupied with the Plan and with the distribution of the forces which will materialize it. A disciple becomes an Accepted Disciple when he starts climbing towards the vision, towards the mountaintop; he can also register consciously what he has seen and then begin to do something towards materializing it. Newly accepted disciples (who are only learning to cooperate) are valuable as "agents for experiment." According to their reaction to the imparted truths and Plan, according to their ability to sense the need and to bring the need and the medium of release into relation and according to their capacity to work with the world disciples (who are definitely responsible to the master of the Ashram for some aspect of the Plan) will be the success of the effort in the outer world.

Discrimination The process of differentiating between the form and the Life, between the soul and the body, between the sum total of the lower manifestation (physical, astral and mental) and the real self, the cause of the lower manifestation; that faculty whereby the self recognizes its own essence in and under all forms; one of the highest faculties in man.

Dispassion The attainment of that state of consciousness where balance is seen, and neither pleasure or pain dominates.

Dual life A life of outer activity and of inner sensitivity.

Dweller on the Threshold The "shadow" or unredeemed aspect of the personality that is built up over lifetimes — it can assume the shape of a grotesque thoughtform; the sum total of forces of the lower nature as expressed

in the personality prior to illumination, to inspiration and to initiation; all that the individual is, apart from the higher spiritual self. Humanity today is the Dweller while the Hierarchy of Souls is the Angel and behind the Angel stands the Presence of Divinity Itself, intuited by the Hierarchy and dimly sensed by humanity but providing in this manner the threefold synthesis which is divine manifestation in form. The Soul goes into battle with the Dweller at a critical stage of its evolution, and eventually emerges triumphant. This process may take several lives.

Ego The soul as an individualised unit of consciousness within the greater ocean of consciousness.

Egoic Groups The "causal" bodies of individual men and women, as they exist on the mental plane, as an expression of the Ego. They congregate in groups according to ray colouring.

Egoic Lotus The 3 tiers of petals (knowledge, love and sacrifice) that are opened over the immense period of time that is the Soul's journey. Eventually the three petals of the central bud (the jewel in the lotus) are opened when the individual achieves "Liberation".

Elementals The spirits of the elements of earth, water, fire and air. They are the lesser "devas" or "builders". They can inhabit the residual etheric / astral bodies of humans that are still breaking down after death, much like a hermit crab inhabits a shell.

Energies Subjective energies are forces pouring from the soul (on soul levels) into the form nature upon its own level of awareness.

Energy A potency of life fluid circulating through the entire body of the Logos and vivifying even the tiniest atom in that whole. The Tibetan uses the word "energy" in reference to the spiritual expression, and the word "force" to indicated the uses which are made of spiritual energy. (see Forces)

Esoteric That which is hidden or veiled. It is subjective wisdom that can only be perceived with the developed subtle senses.

Etheric body The subtle part of the physical body. The physical plane is divided into 7 sub planes (as are all planes). The lower 3 sub planes represent the physical body, and the higher 4 sub planes represent the etheric body.

Evocation A response to invocative appeal. (see Invocation)

Evolution The unfolding of a continually increasing power to respond, the process which unfolds the life within all units, the developing urge which eventually merges all units and all groups until you have the manifestation of what can be called nature, or God, and which is the aggregate of all states of consciousness; ordered change and constant mutation, an ever-increasing power to respond to vibration, a steadily increasing sensitivity to light and illumination.

Fifth principle Mind — the intelligent thinking principle which differentiates the human kingdom from the animal kingdom.

Fire (by Friction) Electricity animating the atoms of matter, or the substance of the solar system, resulting in the "spheroidal form of all manifestation. The innate heat of all spheres. Differentiation of all atoms one from another."

Fire (Electric) Electricity demonstrating as vitality or the will-to-be of some Entity, and manifesting as "Abstract Being, Darkness and Unity."

Fire (Solar) Electricity animating forms or congeries of atoms, and resulting in Coherent groups, the radiation from all groups, or the magnetic interaction of these groups, the synthesis of form; cosmic mental fire; the sum total of the sparks of mind, the fires of the mental bodies and the animating principle of the evolving units of the human race in the three worlds; solar fire is dual. It is the fire of matter or substance and the fire of mind blended. This makes man the six-pointed Star of Light, for each of these fires is triple.

Fohat Cosmic electricity. Primordial light. The universal propelling life force. Ceaseless destructive and constructive power.

Forces Those energies which are limited and imprisoned within a form of any kind — a body, a plane, an organ, a centre; the energies are those streams of directed energy which make impact upon these imprisoned forces from within a greater or more inclusive form, from a subtler plane, thus making contact with a grosser vibratory force. An energy is subtler and more potent than the force upon which it makes impact or establishes contact; the force is less potent but it is anchored. In these last two words you have the key to the problem of the relationship of energies. (see Energy)

Form Electricity on the monadic plane demonstrates as the first manifestation of form, as that which causes forms to cohere. Matter (electrified "fire by friction") and the electric fire of spirit meet and blend, and form appears. Form is the result of the desire for existence, hence the dynamic fire of Will is transmuted into the burning fire of Desire.

Glamour Refers to the world of emotional being and of desire, in which all forms dwell; a distortion of the truth and a faulty reflection of reality; all the aspects of those deceptions, illusions, misunderstandings and misinterpretations which confront the aspirant at every step of their way until they achieve unity. The cause of glamour is primarily based upon the sense of duality. Illusion or Maya, specifically on the astral plane. The former refer to the mental and physical planes respectively. Glamour is astral energy colouring mental energy so that it distorts reality.

Globe An evolution within a "chain" period : seven globes to a chain. Earth is currently in her fourth "globe" period.

Gnosis Knowledge of God. The Mysteries of Being. Wisdom. Sophia.

God Deity or originating cause. The sum-total of all the states of consciousness within the solar system; the Macrocosm; the Universal Mind; the Absolute; the Unknown; the expression of the One Life which animates every form on the outer subjective plane; the Life in which we "live and move and have our being"; a new definition of God was given us when the Buddha taught that God was Light and showed us that way of illumination, and when Christ revealed to us that God was Love through His life and service on earth. A new Approach is on the Way, bringing us the next needed truth. See "Logos".

Goodwill Humanity's first attempt to express the Love of God; an expression of the second Ray of Love-Wisdom; a principle which conceals and contains the hidden purpose of the Logos.

Group A living, functioning Entity having form, personality, soul and purpose in objective; the sum of the quality, consciousness and awareness of those unitary lives of which it is composed.

Group Soul The connection between the composite which is comprised of the soul of each individual member, and the Centre of Light which is that of the Spiritual Kingdom, including the spiritual beings who are the intelligent forces of nature, all the way to the Light of Light Itself — the point of Light within the Mind of God.

Gunās (3) The three divisions of matter: Tamas (inertia), rajas (activity) and Sattva (Harmony).

Guru Spiritual teacher. A Master in metaphysical and ethical doctrines.

Heart An aspect of pure reason; usually considered the organ of pure love but — from the angle of the esoteric sciences — love and reason are synonymous terms, found to be not only the engine which circulates the life fluids, but also the generator of a certain type of intelligent essence which is the positive factor in the life of the cell.

Hierarchy A place of fusion of all souls upon the higher levels of the mental plane; a meeting place of energies; a state of consciousness with the life aspect, Shamballa, at the centre and the circle of humanity constituting the emanating factor, the radiatory influence or the aura, whereby the other kingdoms in nature are evoked into responsive activity. Group of spiritual beings on the inner planes of the solar system who are the intelligent forces of nature and who control the evolutionary processes. Divided into 12 Hierarchies. The Occult Hierarchy or Masters of Wisdom, disciples and initiates are a reflection.

Humanity That evolution through which the Son or Soul aspect is to express itself most perfectly in this cosmic incarnation; that human Centre whose eternal mission is to bring light to all created lives. In Humanity the pairs of opposites blend and the three fires meet. Humanity is the best expression of the manasic principle, and a sheath for the life of God, as well as the individualized consciousness of the Logos. Humanity is the Prodigal and a great experiment in time and space.

Identification Realisation, plus esoteric experience, plus again an absorption into the Whole, and for all of this we have no terminology.

Illumination The light of the intuition breaking through the barriers that the rational faculty has erected; true illumination is related to the intellect and should be, in its purest aspect, divorced from feeling altogether; a condition of knowledge; a state wherein the mind is brought into relation with God, and the longer that condition can be held free from emotional reactions, the more direct will be the communication between the imparted truths. (see Light)

Incarnation The unification of the etheric double with the dense physical body; the taking of a dense physical body; a definitely determined period (from the angle of soul) wherein experiment, experience and expression are the keynotes. Each successive incarnation continues the experiment, deepens the experience and relates the expression more closely to the latent unfolding divinity.

Individualisation The coming together (out of the darkness of abstraction) of the two factors of Spirit and matter by means of a third factor, the intelligent will, purpose and action of an Entity. The unit passes out of the animal kingdom into the human at individualisation. The moment when "the spark of mind" was

implanted in humanity, over 18 million years ago, through the stimulation of the "lords of flame," from the Venus "chain" of the Earth "scheme."

Initiate One who is essentially a blend of scientific and religious training; one who has been re-oriented to certain phases of divine existence which are not yet recognized by the average human being; one who, in his twofold nature (soul and personality), moves forward. No longer is his point of focus that of the personality. He has fused and blended two divine aspects in himself, and they now constitute one integrated unit.

Initiation A progressive sequence of directed energy impacts, characterized by points of tension and governed by the Law of Cause and Effect; a process of developing inclusiveness; a process of continuing integration into centres of force. Successive expansions of consciousness that mark vital stages of the soul's journey. When one is "initiated", one has already been self-initiated, because "to initiate" means to start something that will eventually lead to the higher expansion of awareness. There are initiation ceremonies which "confer" initiation, and give the candidate an expanded experience that they will never forget, inspiring them onward in their evolution.

Each initiation (a) marks the passing of a pupil into a higher class, (b) marks the clear shining forth of the fire, (c) marks the transition from one point of polarization to another, (d) entails the realization of an increasing unity with all that lives, (e) entails the realization of the self with all selves.

Interlude A pause between two activities; a midway point; a pause for constructive thinking; an interim period; an inhalation and exhalation; between the breathing out and the breathing in comes a period of silence and the moment for effective work.

Intuition The apprehension by the mind of reality directly as it is, and not under the form of a perception or a conception, nor as an idea or object of reason — all of which by contrast are intellectual apprehension; pure reason or the faculty which enables the individual to enter into contact with the Universal Mind and grasp the plan synthetically, to seize upon divine Ideas or isolate some fundamental and pure truth; a blend of the two divine qualities of buddhi — manas, or intuitive spiritual understanding (involving interpenetration and identification) and the higher abstract mind, which is essentially the power to comprehend that which is not concrete or tangible but which is, in reality, an innate recognition of the lower aspects of the divine Plan as it must affect life in the three worlds. "The synthetic understanding which is the prerogative of the soul" That which is beyond feelings and thought — buddhic awareness.

Invocation The science of impression in activity and not simply in theory; a conscious focussed appeal. (see Evocation)

Jewel in the Lotus The "jewel in the lotus," to use the ancient oriental appellation, is the point of life by means of which the Monad anchors itself upon the physical plane, and is the life principle therefore of all the transient vehicles — developed, undeveloped or developing. This point of life contains within itself all possibilities, all potentialities, all experiences and all vibratory activities. It embodies the will-to-be, the quality of magnetic attraction (commonly called love), and the active intelligence which will bring the livingness and the love into full expression.

Kalachakra The Wheel of Time. Kalachakra tantra is the most esoteric Mahayana Buddhist teaching given by "Lords of Shamballa."

Kali Hindu goddess of life and death. Kali Yuga (age / cycle) is the present age of death and destruction — a period of 432,000 years.

Kama-manas Desire mind. The combination of astral and lower mental energy. Source of all our "glamours".

Karma The Law of Cause and Effect. Physical action. The Law of Retribution. Karma of merit / demerit. The whole universe is conditioned by this law. Moral effect of an act committed which gratifies personal desire.

Kumaras Hindu for "The mind-born Sons of Brahma". The highest seven self-conscious beings in our planetary scheme. There are 3 "exoteric" and 3 "esoteric" and Sanat Kumara is the "One" in between who mirrors the unformed (arupa) realms into the formed (rupa) realms. These Kumaras originally came to Earth from the Venus "chain" of the Earth "scheme".

Kundalini The power of Life — one of the forces of nature (feminine) that lies coiled, serpent like at the base of the spine. It creates the foundation of matter, into which spirit incarnates. Awakens naturally through evolution, but can have very destructive effects if prematurely activated through wrong meditation or yogic practices.

Lemuria Continent which preceded Atlantis, the last remnants of which are Australia, Borneo, Madagascar and Easter Island. It was in this race / continent that the "spark of mind" was implanted in humanity.

Life Existence manifesting in matter; Spirit, Energy, the Father, the First aspect of Divinity; the sustaining, originating Cause and Source of all Manifestation; loving synthesis in action.

Light The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen; signifies two things: energy and its manifestation in form of some kind; Light and Substance are synonymous terms; the soul is light; Light is known by what it reveals. (see Illumination)

Logos "God" in a relative sense. There is a Planetary Logos and a Solar Logos. Logos = word: the creative word (mantram) brings all forms into manifestation, whether it is a solar system or a human being.

Lords of Flame One of the great Hierarchies of spiritual beings who guide the solar system. Closely related to the Kumaras.

Love An impersonal potency or energy, dependent for its effect upon the type of form which it contacts and upon which it makes an impact; not a sentiment or an emotion, nor is it desire or a selfish motive for right action in daily life; the wielding of the force which guides the worlds and which leads to integration, unity and inclusiveness, which impels Deity itself to action; an expression of soul contact.

Lotus Description of any energy centre, human or cosmic. The petals of a lotus represent different qualities, colours and stages of evolution. They may be folded and unawakened, or unfolded and awakened.

Macrocosm The greater body of manifestation in which we (the microcosm) live.

Mahachohan Lord of Civilisation. Head of the third great department of the Hierarchy. Embodiment of the 3rd ray or 3rd aspect of Deity — Active Intelligence, which gives birth to the 4 rays of attribute.

Mahamanvantara A great cycle of manifestation for a solar system. A "manvantara" is a lesser cycle within this greater cycle, but still of vast duration by human standards — 308,448,000 years.

Maitreya Buddha Forthcoming Buddha of Compassion. The Christ.

Manas The mind, the mental faculty, that which distinguishes the human from mere animal. The individualising principle; that which enables the individual to

know that he or she exists, feels and knows. Divided into two parts — higher mind / lower mind.

Mandala A mystical diagram in which are drawn symbols representing aspects of Deity, and used to invoke that energy.

Mantrams A form of words or syllables rhythmically arranged, so that when sounded, certain vibrations are generated. "The word made flesh."

Manu The representative name of the great Being who is the Ruler or primal progenitor of the human race. "Manu" and "Manas" come from the sanskrit root "man" — "to think".

Manvantara Period of activity as opposed to a period of rest. Frequently used to express a period of planetary activity and its seven races.

Maya Illusion on the physical plane; that which the whole planet is enmeshed. The result of manifestation; an aspect of time; the world of physical forces in which we dwell; related to the form-building activity of the planetary Logos Himself. (see "Glamour")

Masonry Ancient esoteric tradition whereby an attempt is made to align with the forces of Deity, through ritual, allegory and symbol, and thereby anchor those forces upon the physical plane. The "Builders" of Masonry are an allegory for the building, by the soul, of the causal body. Some more modern orders admit women.

Master One who has taken the fifth Planetary initiation and the first Sirian or Cosmic initiation; a Master of the Wisdom is One Who has effected the transfer or polarisation from the three atoms of the personal life — as included in the causal body — into the three atoms of the Spiritual Triad. He is consciously spirit-intuition-abstract mind or Atma-Buddhi-manas, and this is not potentially but in full effective power, realized through experience; One Who knows the meaning of consciousness, Life and of Spirit (see Adept).

Mayavi Rupa Sanskrit "illusory form". Body of manifestation created by a Master through an act of will, for use in the three worlds.

Meditation The means by which the higher consciousness is contacted; the result of an inward-turning tendency, of the capacity to abstract the consciousness from form and substance and to centre within itself; the mind's power to hold itself steady in the light; a technique of the mind which eventually produces correct, unimpeded relationship, another name for alignment; the

establishment of a direct channel between one source, the Monad, and its expression. (see Alignment)

Microcosm The little universe, or a human manifesting through its body, the physical body.

Mind The mental faculty that attracts, repels, coordinates and produces cohesion. (see Manas)

Monad The immortal essence of ourselves which uses the soul to incarnate through, just as the soul incarnates through our personality. The One. The threefold spirit on its own plane. The unified triad of atma, buddhi and manas — Spiritual Will, intuition, and Higher Mind — or the immortal part of the unit which reincarnates in the lower kingdoms and gradually progresses through them to the final goal; dynamic will or purpose remaining unrevealed until after the third initiation; Life, the sustaining force; a Lord of persevering and ceaseless devotion to the pursuit of a seen and determined objective; Human Monads in their seven types are found on the plane of spirit as it is the plane of duality. The deva Monads are also found there.

Monadic consciousness The great universal Oneness: Life, the sustaining force — the unified triad of Spiritual Will, intuition, and Higher Mind. Monadic consciousness embodies divine life — purpose and intent, and uses the soul in order to demonstrate through that soul the inherent purpose of deity. Building of the bridge between lower and higher mind is the first step towards achieving monadic consciousness, and thus the first step towards the Way of the Higher Evolution.

Mother of the World Great "deva lord" who embodies the substance of all planes of perception. She is responsible for the Law of Karma working out through her many deva "agents".

Nadi A channel for the conveying of prana in the etheric vehicle.

New Group of World Servers On the physical plane, without any exoteric organization, ceremonials, or outer form, there is integrating — silently, steadily and powerfully — a group of men and women who will supersede eventually the previous hierarchical effort. They are of all races; they speak all languages; they embrace all religions, all sciences and all philosophies. Their characteristics are synthesis, inclusiveness, intellectuality and fine mental development. They own to no creed, save the creed of Brotherhood, based on the One Life.

Nirmanakayas The perfected beings who renounce nirvana (the highest state of spiritual bliss) and choose a life of self-sacrifice, becoming members of that invisible host which ever protects humanity within karmic limits.

Nirvana The Way into new fields of spiritual experience and of divine development — incomprehensible as of yet, even to the initiate of the third degree; this Way is revealed only when the antahkarana is built and completed and the disciple becomes focussed in the Triad as consciously as he / she is now focussed in the threefold lower nature; the culmination of all knowledge and absolute wisdom.

Occultist The true occultist is a scientist and a devotee; where these two are not merged we have the mystic, as well as the individual in danger of black magic, being governed by the intellect and not by selflessness; the occultist is only the mystic functioning on a higher plane — that of the mind.

One About Whom Naught May Be Said (The) The Existence Who, through His life, informs seven solar systems, including ours; also called the Cosmic Logos.

Path (The) The "linking light" or "bridging radiance" created between the higher and the lower; communion or interplay between the personality and the Soul, and later between the personality and Spirit; "Before the person can tread the path, they must become that path them self"; The antahkarana is the Path symbolically. This is one of the paradoxes of the esoteric science. Step by step and stage by stage, we construct that Path just as the spider spins its thread. It is that "way back" which we evolve out of ourselves; it is that Way which we also find and tread.

Permanent atom Small force centres on each of the planes which hold the memory of all incarnations, and which the reincarnating soul draws upon when building new bodies of manifestation.

Personality The sum total of the threefold lower self: physical, astral, mental: a blend of mental energy, of emotional energy and of vital force, and these three are masked, hidden or revealed (note this terminology) by an outer shell or form of dense physical matter. This outer crust is in itself a form of negative energy. The result of this union of three energies in an objective form is self-consciousness and their fusion produces that sense of individuality which justifies the use of the word "I," and which relates all occurrences to a self; where this central conscious entity exists, utilising the mind, reacting sensuously through the emotional body, and energising the dense physical (via the vital body), then one has a personality; awareness of identity in relation to other

identities — true of God or man; sense or identity persists only during the creative process; a state of awareness which has its conditioning factor in the mind stuff and this can be transcended when the mind stuff no longer controls.

Plan The expression of Purpose in time and space; all we really know is the fact of the Plan and that it is very good; that we are enfolded within it and subject to it; the objective of the Plan is to reproduce upon the plane of the earth the inner kingdom of the soul.

Plane (of Perception) A level of existence. There are seven planes of perception on this, the "cosmic physical" plane — physical, astral, mental, buddhic, atmic, monadic and Adi. These planes are subdivided into seven sub planes each, making 49 sub planes in all. An essential part of "septenaries" in occultism that can be applied, with the 7 rays, to broaden understanding.

Planetary Logos This term is generally applied to the seven highest spirits corresponding to the seven archangels of the Christian. They have all passed through the human stage and are now manifesting through a planet and its evolutions, in the same way that man manifests through his physical body. The highest planetary spirit working through any particular globe is, in reality, the personal God of the planet. The Being Who is the life of our planet; the One in Whom we live and move and have our being; the sum total of all organized life; the informing, ensouling life of this planet earth; the life which integrates the planet as a whole, and pours through all forms — great or small — which, in their aggregate, constitute the Planetary form; our planetary Logos has been given the name of the "experimenting divine physicist." A planetary logos is the informing entity of any planetary scheme, which is made up of many other globes and chains — the physical planet just being one expression of the great life incarnate in a scheme. The Kumara for our planet, Sanat Kumara, is simply the personality expression of this great being.

Prakriti That which caused the universe to manifest itself.

Prana The Life principle, the breath of life.

Pranayama The science of rhythmic breathing as applied in meditation.

Prayer is an approach to Divinity invoked by the aspirant, the mystic or the spiritually inclined being that blends personality desire with a desire for soul contact. Through the demonstrated effectiveness of prayer, one observes the subtler powers and the fact of the essential dualism of life, discovering both a lower self and a higher Self.

Precipitation An aggregation of energies arranged in a certain form, in order to express the idea of some creative Thinker, and qualified or characterised by the nature of his thought and held in that peculiar form as long as thought remains dynamic.

Principle The embodiment of some aspect of truth on which this system of ours is based; that which governs always the action of the ego on its own plane. The basic differentiations, essential qualities or types of energy upon which all things are built; they give the distinctive nature of all forms. Principles are eternal, personalities temporal. Principles are to be viewed in the light of eternity, personalities from the standpoint of time. The trouble is that, in many situations, two principles are involved, one of which is secondary. The difficulty lies in the fact that (both being principles) both are right. It is a rule for safe guidance always to remember that usually basic principles (for their wise comprehension and fruitful working out) call for play of intuition whilst secondary principles are more purely mental. The methods hence necessarily differ. While holding to the basic principles, the wisest methods are silence and a joyful confidence that the Law works.

Principle of Expansion That which brings about the development of consciousness so that the latent germ of sentiency or of sensitive response to environment may be fostered in the living unit.

Principle of Liberation Closely linked with that of the problem of limitation; death is governed by the Principle of Liberation, and not by that of Limitation. Death is only recognised as a factor to be dealt with by self-conscious lives and is only misunderstood by human beings, who are the most glamoured and deluded of all incarnated lives. (See Death)

Principle of Limitation The outcome of the purposeful will and formulated desire of some thinking Being, and governs consequently the form-taking process of all incarnated lives; controls the scope of an incarnation, sets its measure and rhythm, determines the radius of its influence, and brings about that illusory appearance of reality which we call manifestation. (see Principle of Liberation)

Principle of Periodic Manifestation The Law of Cycles; a beneficent operation of the love-wisdom of innate divinity; produces that sequence of the states of consciousness which we term Time; produces in the world field of awareness a gradual and slow growth towards self-expression, self-appreciation, and self-realisation.

Purpose The motivating Life behind all that emanates from Shamballa; impulses all the activities of the Hierarchy; the task of the Hierarchy is to formulate the Plan for all forms of life in the three worlds and the four kingdoms in nature; the Purpose of God is that which implements the Plan; God reveals His purpose through the activity of the mind — which in turn impresses the brain, attuned to receptivity. Later again, the mind becomes responsive to an illumination, emanating from the Spirit aspect. Purpose is an energy, released within the confines of the Council Chamber (Shamballa) and there it takes shape. Behind it looms that which has brought it into being. (see Plan)

Purusha The spiritual self. The embodied self. The word literally means "The dweller in the city" — that is, in the body. It is derived from the Sanskrit "pura" which means city or body, and "usha" a derivative of the verb "vas," to dwell.

Quaternary The fourfold lower self, or man, in the three worlds. There are various divisions of this, but perhaps for our purpose the best is to enumerate the four as follows:

1. Lower mind.
2. Emotional or karmic body.
3. Prana, or the Life Principle.
4. The etheric body, or the highest division of the twofold physical body.

Raja Lord Angel who ensouls and is the controlling intelligence of a plane.

Raja yoga True system of developing psychic and spiritual powers and union with the soul. It involves the exercise, regulation and concentration of thought. It is the "kingly science" and supersedes hatha and bhakti yoga. (see also Yoga)

Ray One of the seven streams of force from cosmic sources that enter our solar system and condition all life within it, including all the kingdoms of nature on Earth. The planets in the solar system are really the "vehicles" that pass this energy on. Each individual has their own "ray make-up".

Reality That which lies not in the tangible but what is to us intangible, unseen and unheard. These three words indicate the goal and the problem of the disciple, plus the resultant effect of conscious, intelligent spiritual work motivated by love; the True and the Beautiful; the divine Purpose.

Reincarnation Doctrine of cyclic rebirth by the evolving consciousness through all types of environments in accordance with the Law of Karma. Reincarnation is implicit in the manifested universe and is a basic and fundamental theme underlying systemic pulsation.

Religion The invocative appeal of humanity which leads to the evocative response of the Spirit of God; the recognition by the part of its relationship to the Whole, plus a constantly growing demand for increased awareness of that relation; that which draws forth the recognition of the Whole that demand has been made. (see Evocation)

Resurrection To rise again; to return to an original state by rising. (see Soul)

Revelation The synthesis of the divine expressive purpose; related to the will-to-good which is, in its turn, a complete expression of the love nature of Deity.

Ring-pass-not The limit of the field of activity of the central life force; the periphery of the influence of the sun, both esoterically and exoterically understood; in the average human being, it is the spheroidal form of his mental body which extends considerably beyond the physical and enables him to function on the lower levels of the mental plane. Term is normally used when referring to the orb of energetic influence of an cosmic entity, like a Planetary or Solar Logos, but it can also be applied to other forms of life. The existence of a ring-pass-not is based on the Laws of Attraction and Cohesion that affect matter and energy of different degrees, including what we know as the "spiritual dimensions." These energies are gathered and held consciously (particularly by higher initiates and above) in a state of cohesion, or "point of tension," and they are used by these entities for purposes of creation, reception and projection. We can also say the ring-pass-not is the combination of the different energy sheaths that human or cosmic spirits gather around themselves. In relation to our Planet, and the Solar System, the ring-pass-not is the Cosmic Physical Plane.

Rishi The seven Rishis are the Regents of the seven stars comprising the Great Bear. The seven stars of the Great Bear correspond to the seven head centres of the One About Whom Naught May Be Said. Each of these stars transmits a ray of energy into our solar system; these seven rays are the givers of life to all on this earth. It is the seven Rishis who mark the time and the duration of events in our septenary life cycle.

Root race One of the seven major races that evolve upon a planet during a "world period". Most Asian races belong to the 4th Atlantean root race, and most of the west are of the 5th or Aryan root race. There are 7 sub races to each root race, just as there are 7 sub planes to each plane.

Round A periodical life-wave that pours through a globe, chain and scheme.

Sacrifice Word comes from "Sacer" meaning "holy," and "facere" — "to make," therefore "to make holy"; complete conformity with the will of God because the

spiritual will of the person and the divine will (as they recognize it in the Plan) is their own will; the urge to sacrifice is the major determining impulse which impelled the Soul of God Himself to enter into form life; sacrifice must not be regarded as "giving-up" but rather as a "taking-over," through identification; should signify a joyful process of making desire "holy"; the achievement of a state of bliss and of ecstasy because it is the realisation of another divine aspect; it has a mysterious relation to the Law of Karma.

Sahasrara The thousand-pedalled spiritual centre at the crown of the head where one experiences the highest state of Consciousness.

Samadhi Complete detachment from the cells of the body and the emotions.

Sanat Kumara The coherent force within the planet earth, holding, through His radiatory influence, all forms and all substances in the planetary form so that they constitute one coherent, energised and functioning whole; He is to the Planetary Logos what the personality, plus soul, is to the disciple. The Lord of the World; the etheric-physical expression of our Planetary Logos who dwells on Shamballa. A great Being, who sacrificed Himself to become the personality vehicle for the ensouling deity of our planet 18.5 million years ago. The nearest aspect of God that we can know.

Sangha Community of monks. One of 3 precious jewels that must be held by one wishing to tread the path of Liberation.

Sanskrit Ancient language of India, in which the sacred texts are written.

Scheme The "system of worlds" that constitute the evolution of a Planetary Logos — e.g. Earth, Venus etc. This system includes chains, globes and rounds, or periodical life waves moving through it.

Senzar The secret language or "mystery speech" of initiated adepts all over the world. It is very ancient, and predates Sanskrit.

Septenary Consisting of, or relating to, the number seven; our solar system as well as the chakra system of humans and divine beings alike are septenary in constitution. Indeed all manifestation is of a septenary nature; the three major rays together with the four minor rays form a septenary.

Service The utilisation of soul force for the good for the group; the spontaneous effect of soul contact; a scientific mode of expressing love-wisdom under the influence of one or other of the seven rays, according to the soul ray of the serving disciple; an aspect of that divine energy which works always under the

destroyer aspect, for it destroys the forms in order to release; a manifestation of the Principle of Liberation, and of this principle, death and service constitute two aspects; service saves, liberates and releases, on various levels, the imprisoned consciousness. The same statements can be made of death. But unless service can be rendered from an intuitive understanding of all the facts in the case, interpreted intelligently, and applied in a spirit of love upon the physical plane, it fails to fulfil its mission adequately; a soul instinct; may be effected upon the inner planes and on a large scale and yet there may be no evidence of this upon the physical plane, except in the beauty of a life lived. When the factor of spiritual illumination enters into that service, you have those transcendent Lights which have illumined the way of humanity and have acted like searchlights, thrown out into the great ocean of consciousness, revealing to man the Path he can and must go upon. (see Death and Principle of Liberation)

Service (Group) Group service is simply the life of example. The best exponent of the ageless Wisdom lives each day in the place where he is the life of the disciple; he does not live it in the place where he thinks he should be.

Shamballa: Shamballa is simply a word conveying the idea of a vast focal point of energies which are assembled and brought together by the Planetary Logos in order to create a manifestation adequate to His unfolding intention and planetary service. Shamballa is a state of consciousness or a phase of sensitive awareness wherein there is acute and dynamic response to divine purpose. This Centre is created by the Ray of Will or Power; its major activity is bequeathing, distributing and circulating the basic principle of life itself to every form which is held within the planetary ring-pass-not of the planetary Life or Logos. From that Centre, the will of God goes forth and the power of God becomes the messenger of His will. The basic quality of Shamballa is dynamic. Its mode of work is inspiration. It draws response but remains immovable itself. It works not with the Law of Attraction, but by the Law of Synthesis, by a fiat of the Will, based on a clearly formulated purpose and program. Also, the City of the Gods, "Shangri-La," said to be situated in the Gobi desert, and where Sanat Kumara is "anchored" in etheric substance.

Siddhis Psychic powers developed through yogic practices. Many types.

Sirius Star from which this solar system emanated — important for Earth in this cycle.

Solar Logos The great entity incarnate as our solar system, the active, directing Intelligence Who is working with definite purpose through His Seven Centres. The planets in this Being's body represent its major "chakras."

Soul Neither spirit nor matter but the relation between them. It is the middle or love principle and that which reincarnates in different bodies — the Mediator or Middle Principle; that entity which is brought into being when the spirit aspect and the matter aspect are related to each other; neither spirit nor matter but the relation between them; the link between God and His form; another name for the Christ principle, whether in nature or in man; the form-building aspect; the force of evolution itself. In the world of phenomenal appearance, it is the creating agent, the major building factor, the constructor of forms. Essentially it is light, both literally from the vibratory angle, and philosophically from the angle of constituting the true medium of knowledge; light symbolically, for it is like the rays of the sun, which pour out into the darkness, through the medium of the brain, thus the way of the human being becomes increasingly illumined. Spirit and matter, when brought into a close rapport, necessarily exert an effect upon each other. Matter, so-called, is energized or "lifted up" in the occult sense of the term by its contact with spirit, so-called. Spirit, in its turn, is enabled to enhance its vibration through the medium of experience in matter. The bringing together of these two divine aspects results in the emergence of a third, which we call the soul, and through the medium of the soul, spirit develops a sentiency and a conscious awareness and capacity to respond which remains its permanent possession when the divorce between the two comes around eventually and cyclically.

Spirit The One Life back of all forms; the central energy which is the cause of all manifestation; the word spirit is applied to that undefinable, elusive, essential impulse or Life which is the cause of all manifestation; the breath of Life; spirit is matter at its highest point of expression, and matter is spirit at its lowest; life and will.

Spirit of Peace A potent Entity and not an abstract concept, wielding forces hitherto unfamiliar to our planet; a Being of tremendous cosmic potency; in a mysterious sense, the Spirit of Equilibrium; He works with the Law of Action and Reaction.

Spiritual The world of light and beauty, of order and purpose; all manifestations of life are spiritual; the word relates to attitudes, to relationships, to the moving forward from one level of consciousness to the next; related to the power to see the vision; relates to the expansion of consciousness at whatever level; all activity which drives the human being forward towards some form of development — physical, emotional, intuitional, and so forth — is essentially spiritual in nature and is indicative of the livingness of the inner divine Entity.

Spiritual Triad The expression of the Monad in the formless worlds; the vehicle of the Monad.

Subjective Realm A field which is vitally more real than is the objective, once it is entered and known. It is a question of acceptance, first of all, of its existence, the development of a mechanism of contact, the cultivation of the ability to use this mechanism at will, and then inspired interpretation.

Substance The principle underlying dense matter.

Sutratma The "life" thread anchored in the heart — linking spirit, soul and body via the "permanent atoms".

Synthesis The method whereby comprehension is attained; the many becoming the One; an attribute of the divine will and the outstanding quality of Deity.

Thangka "The most unique form of ancient symbolic religious sermons, through art, in existence" A Thangka is a painted or embroidered banner / tapestry hung in a monastery or a family altar and carried by lamas in ceremonial processions. In Tibetan the word "than" means flat and the suffix "ka" stands for painting. These scroll paintings have served as religious record as well as a treasured art form.

Tantra The union of male / female forces in the body that evokes the wisdom principle and hence highest spiritual awareness. Often distorted into lower sex yoga practices.

Triad Atma, buddhi, manas — expression of the Monad.

Transfiguration The stage upon the Path of Initiation wherein the third initiation is undergone, when the personality is irradiated by the full light of the soul and the three personality vehicles are completely transcended; these vehicles have become simply forms through which spiritual love may flow out into the world of men in the salvaging task of creation.

Transmutation Esoterically, the mode whereby force is changed into energy; the method whereby that which is lower is absorbed by the higher; the achieving of a correct sense of proportion in relation to any phase of life; the liberation of the essence in order that it may seek a new centre; the passage across from one state of being to another through the agency of fire; an achievement and not a process.

Unity The conscious adaptation of the initiated disciple to the greater Whole, as his absorption into the group through his obedience to the laws of the soul, and as governing his attitude to that in which he lives and moves and has his being. Unity is achieved and is the reward of action and effort. Isolated unity describes

the stage which the Master has reached. Isolated identity (with the soul) is that of the disciple up to and including the third initiation. Isolated individuality is that of the disciple.

Vedas Most sacred and ancient of Sanskrit works, written in hymn form.

Way of Higher Evolution This way is related to the spiritual condition and purpose of the Monad whose goal is not expansion of consciousness, but of that which such expansions of consciousness will reveal — a very different matter and one which is as yet entirely meaningless to anyone who has not taken the third initiation; the Christ and His great Brothers, and all of even higher initiate-rank than They possess, have a definite goal, but it is one which will only define itself clearly in the third solar system, the system in which the Will of God is the dominant idea, as the Love of God conditions this system in which we now function; this is not consciousness or awareness; it is a stage of Being which is connected with the Law of Sacrifice — the law which governs those states of being which grow out of the establishment of right human relations. (see Sacrifice, Path)

Wesak A festival which occurs at the Taurus full moon every year, celebrating the birth of the Buddha, and where the Hierarchy gather to receive newly released forces to the planet. A time for Initiation.

Wheels This term indicates the great wheel of changing life in which the human entities have been called upon to work and which must never be abandoned, out of compassion for man and in obedience to the Law of Oneness which connects many.

Will Desire formulated so clearly and carried so powerfully to an intelligent climax that the mode of its materialisation is grasped with such accuracy and energised with such intent that the result is inescapable. Pure will is only possible to a coordinated thinker, to truly self-conscious entities; the basis of the One Life which synthesises all groups; the unity of love and intention; the energy of the soul expressing itself as direction, progress and conformity to the Plan; monadic essence qualified by "fixed determination" which is identified with the Will or Purpose of the planetary Logos; the highest divine aspect which the initiate finally manifests, prior to entering upon the Way of Higher Evolution; active intelligent purpose, lovingly applied. (see Way, Love, Purpose)

Will-Purpose The steely, brittle, determined, dynamic will of the devoted aspirant must change into the steadfast, calm purpose of the soul working

through the disciple. The soul is fluid in adjustment but undeviating in aim; quality of the first Ray. (see Rays)

Will-to-Good The will-to-good is the basic quality of divine purpose involving planned activity and a definite goal to be achieved.

White magic Conscious cooperation with spiritual law and the deva forces to bring about manifested change, for the motive of service to humanity.

World Saviour Mankind itself is the world Saviour, of which all world Saviours have been but the symbol and guarantee.

World Teacher The World Teacher takes office cyclically. His cycles do not coincide with the Manu as the Manu holds office for the entire root race. The World Teacher gives out a keynote for the various religions and is the emanating source for periodical religious impulses. The duration of his cycles are not given out. The Buddha held office prior to the present World Teacher and upon his Illumination His place was taken by the Lord Maitreya whom the Occidentals call the Christ.

Yoga Sanskrit "unite". The science of union. Hatha (physical). Bhakti (devotional - astral). Karma (yoga of action). Raja ("kingly" - mental) Agni (fire - intuitive / buddhic)

Zodiac Astrology is based, curiously enough, upon illusion, for the zodiac is the imaginary path of the sun through the heavens, as it appears from the standpoint of our planet. The sun is not in any sign of the zodiac but only appears to be as it passes between our earth and the constellations at any particular time or season. Although largely an illusion, at the same time the constellations exist, and the streams of energy which pass and repass, intermingle and interlock throughout the body of space are by no means illusions but definitely express eternal relationships.

Sources and References

- Ali, H., Boorstein, S., Dass, R., Goldstein, J., Goleman, D., Hall, R., Kornfield, J., McDonald, M., Salzberg, S., Vaughan, F., & Walsh, R. (1988). Psychotherapy and meditation. *Inquiring Mind*, 5(1), 1-9.
- Barber T. X. (1970). *LSD, marijuana, yoga, and hypnosis*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co.
- Benson H. (1975). *The relaxation response*. New York: Morrow.
- Bhajananda S. (1980a). Concentration and meditation – I. *Prabuddha Bharata*, 85, 7, 282-288.
- Bhajananda, S. (1980b). Concentration and meditation – II. *Prabuddha Bharata*, 85, 8, 322-329.
- Bhajananda, S. (1980c). Concentration and meditation – III. *Prabuddha Bharata*, 85, 9, 362-368.
- Bhajananda, S. (1980d). Concentration and meditation – IV. *Prabuddha Bharata*, 85, 10, 402-409.
- Bhajananda, S. (1980e). Concentration and meditation – V. *Prabuddha Bharata*, 85, 11, 442-449.
- Bhajananda, S. (1981a). Types of meditation – I. *Prabuddha Bharata*, 86, 5, 202-207.
- Bhajananda, S. (1981b). Upasana – A unified discipline. *Prabuddha Bharata*, 86, 7, 282-289.
- Bhajananda, S. (1983). Three highways of meditation. *Prabuddha Bharata*, 88, 9, 162-170.
- Bogart, G. (1990). *The use of meditation in psychotherapy: A review of literature*. Saybrook Institute Candidacy Essay.
- Brown D. P. (1977). A model for the levels of concentration meditation. *International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis*, 25, 266-273.
- Brown D. P. (1986). The stages of meditation in cross-cultural perspective. In K.W. Wilber, J. Engler, & D. P. Brown, *Transformations of consciousness: Conventional and contemplative perspectives on development* (pp. 17-52). Shambala, Boston & London: New Science Library.
- Carrington, P. (1987). *Freedom in meditation*. Kendall Park NJ: Pace Educational Systems (3rd Edn).

- Deikman, A. J. (1971). Bimodal consciousness. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 25,481-489.
- Goleman, D. (1977). *The varieties of meditative experiences*. New York: Dutton.
- Govinda, L.A. (1978). *Creative meditation and multidimensional consciousness* .
- Holmes, D. (1984). Meditation and somatic arousal. *American Psychologist*, 39, 1, 1-10.
- Johnson, W. (1982). *Riding the Ox home: A history of meditation from shamanism to science*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- S. K. Kiran Kumar (1981). *A study of personality correlates in certain clinical conditions and other states suggestive of altered states of consciousness*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Bangalore University, India.
- S. K. Kiran Kumar (2001). Contextual approach to meditation and Integral Psychology. In M. Cornellison (Ed.) *Consciousness and its transformation- Papers presented at the Second International Conference of Psychology*. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo International Centre for Education.
- Kornfield, J. (1979). Intensive insight meditation: A phenomenological study. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 11(1), 41-59.
- Murphy, M., & Donovan, S. (1997). *The physical and psychological effects of meditation*. Sausalito, CA: Institute of Noetic Sciences.
- Naranjo, C., & Ornstein, R. E. (1971). *On the psychology of meditation*. New York: Viking Press.
- Ornstein, R. E. (1972). *The psychology of consciousness*. San Francisco: W. H. Freeman & Co.
- Osis, K., Bokert, E. & Carlson, M. L. (1973). Dimensions of the meditative experience. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 5, 2, 109-135.
- Rao, K. R. (1989). Meditation: Sacred and secular—A review and assessment of some recent research. *Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology*, 15(2), 51-74.
- Shapiro, D. H. (1980). *Meditation: Self-regulation strategy and altered states of consciousness*. New York: Aldine.

- Shapiro, D. H. (1982). Overview: Clinical and physiological comparison of meditation with other self-control strategies. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 139, 3, 267-274.
- Shapiro, D. H. (1983). Meditation as an altered state of consciousness: Empirical contributions of Western behavioural science. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 1, 61-81.
- Shapiro, D. H. (1985). Clinical use of meditation as a self-regulation strategy: Comments on Holme's conclusions and implications. *American Psychologist*, 7, 719-722.
- Shapiro, D. H., & Giber, D. (1978). Meditation and psychotherapeutic effects. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 35, 294-302.
- Shapiro, D. H., & Walsh, R. (Eds.) (1984). *Meditation: Classic and contemporary perspectives*. New York: Aldine.
- Tart C. T. (1975a). *Transpersonal psychologies*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.
- Tart C. T. (1989). *Open mind, discriminating mind: Reflections on human possibilities*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.
- Tart C. T., & Young, S. (1989). Meditation and psychology: A dialogue. In C. T. Tart. *Open mind, discriminating mind: Reflections of human possibilities*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.
- Uma, K. (1969). *Construction of a personality inventory based on doctrine of three gunas*. Master's dissertation, Osmania University, India.
- Vigne, J. (1997). Meditation and mental health. *Indian Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 24, 1, 46-51.
- Walsh, R. (1977). Initial meditative experiences: Part I. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 9(2), 151-192.
- Walsh, R. (1978). Initial meditative experiences: Part II. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 10(1), 1-28.
- Walsh, R. (1980). The consciousness disciplines and the behavioural sciences. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 137, 663-673.
- Walsh, R. (1983). Meditation practice and research. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 23(1), 18-50.
- Walsh, R. (1999). Asian contemplative disciplines: Common practices, clinical applications, and research findings. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 31, 2, 83-107.

- West, M. A. (1986). Meditation: Psychology and human experience. In G. L. Claxton (Ed.), *Beyond Therapy: The impact of eastern religions on psychological theory and practice* (pp. 244-267). London: Wisdom Publications.
- West, M. A. (1987). Meditation: Magic, myth and mystery. In M. A. West (Ed.), *On the psychology of meditation*. Oxford, England: Clarendon Press.
- Wilber, K., Engler, J., & Brown, D. P. (1986). *Transformations of consciousness: Conventional and contemplative perspectives on development*. Shambala, Boston & London: New Science Library.
- Uma, K. (1969). *Construction of a personality inventory based on doctrine of three gunas*. Master's dissertation, Osmania University, India.
- Vigne, J. (1997). Meditation and mental health. *Indian Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 24, 1, 46-51.
- Walsh, R. (1977). Initial meditative experiences: Part I. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 9(2), 151-192.
- Walsh, R. (1978). Initial meditative experiences: Part II. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 10(1), 1-28.
- Walsh, R. (1980). The consciousness disciplines and the behavioural sciences. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 137, 663-673.
- Walsh, R. (1983). Meditation practice and research. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 23(1), 18-50.
- Walsh, R. (1999). Asian contemplative disciplines: Common practices, clinical applications, and research findings. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 31, 2, 83-107.
- West, M. A. (1986). Meditation: Psychology and human experience. In G. L. Claxton (Ed.), *Beyond Therapy: The impact of eastern religions on psychological theory and practice* (pp. 244-267). London: Wisdom Publications.
- West, M. A. (1987). Meditation: Magic, myth and mystery. In M. A. West (Ed.), *On the psychology of meditation*. Oxford, England: Clarendon Press.
- Wilber, K., Engler, J., & Brown, D. P. (1986). *Transformations of consciousness: Conventional and contemplative perspectives on development*. Shambala, Boston & London: New Science Library.

The Editor, Author and Researcher



Philippe L. De Coster, B.Th., D.D. joined Sundial House, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, UK team in 1971, and joined Michael Eastcott and Nancy Magor, both translators in English of Dr. Roberto Assagioli's life work. De Coster represented together with Tilla Grenier (Brussels) the two French sections of the Meditation Group for the New Age, and Creative Meditation Group, also called the French Section. When Tilla Grenier died the two groups moved to Ghent, and was assisted by François Geldof for the distribution of the booklets of both groups. In 1970 De Coster was awarded with a certificate of Unity School of Christianity, Lee's Summit, Missouri for his knowledge, the course being of a metaphysical character covering the fundamental principles of the teachings of Unity and their applications in redeeming the mind and healing the body. As the studies were "extra muros" (extension programme) it lasted almost ten years.

The author's work for the French section of MGNA and GMC, was under the leadership of Sundial House, Nevill Court, Tunbridge wells, Kent, UK, estate of Michal Eastcott and Nancy Magor



At Sundial House – Michal Eastcott (third left in beige)

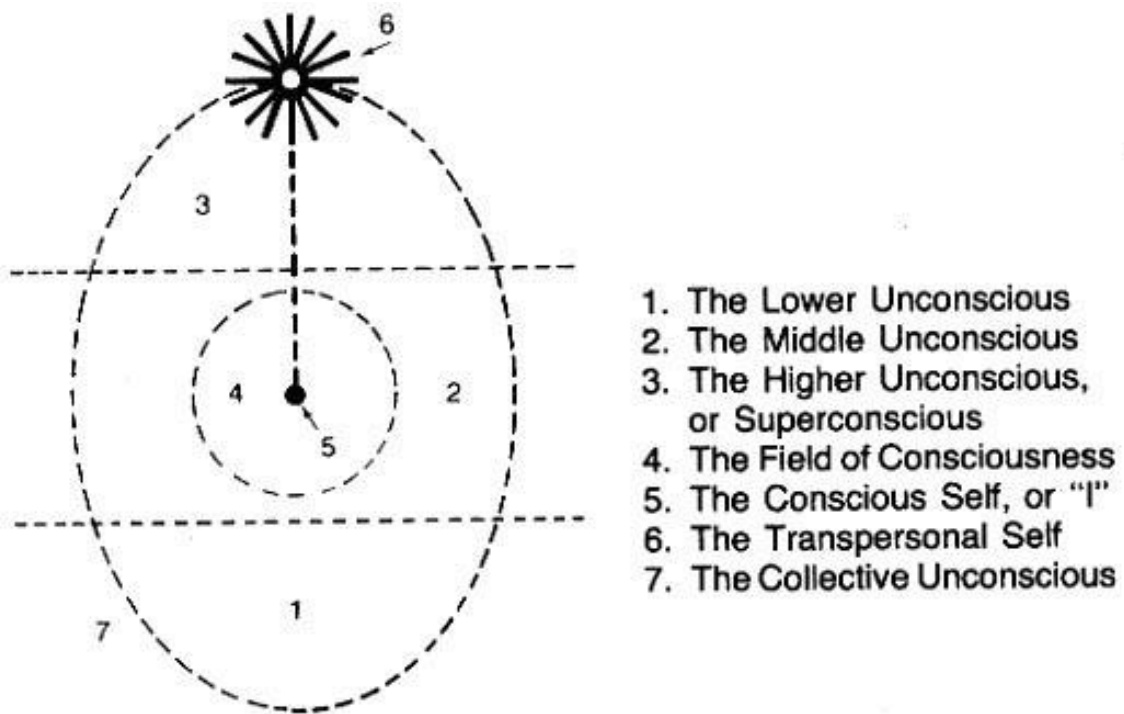


Dr. Roberto Assagioli and Michal Eastcott



Dr. Roberto Assagioli, M.D. at Sundial House in conversation

The Egg Diagram



Dr. Roberto Assagioli (1975) was an Italian doctor, and one of the first to

introduce psychoanalysis in Italy. Around 1910 he began to put forward his own version, somewhat closer to Jung than to Freud, emphasising that dynamic that dynamic psychology should not only be concerned with depth (the unconscious) but also with height (the superconscious).

Perhaps the greatest confusion in dealing with the higher realms of human nature is the lack of a clear understanding of the distinction between the superconscious and the Self.

Such a distinction can be made. It will be of much practical help to those who want to understand their own experiences, and who seek a clear direction, with stable and recognizable landmarks, along the transpersonal dimension.

Let us begin with the superconscious. Strictly speaking, “superconscious” is just a term to designate the higher, spiritual, or transpersonal region of the psyche. (*See diagram above*) In it various psychological functions, processes, and energies are to be found, just as in the personality, although in the superconscious they can display much greater activity and diversity. So *the difference between the superconscious and the personality is one of level, not of nature*. And superconscious experiences consist fundamentally in becoming aware of the activity which is going on in the higher levels of the human consciousness. For example states of ecstasy, of joy, of love for all living creatures, reported by many mystics, impulses to self-sacrifice of the herd, creative flashes of the artist, all belong to the higher levels of the superconscious.

Instead the Transpersonal Self is basically “ontological”. Onthos means *being* – which *is not process*, which is something standing in itself.

To make a very simple analogy, the Self is like the pivot point, or hinge of a door; the door swings, but the hinge remains steady. Yet, the Self is not only the focal point around which the many superconscious processes occur; it is also the *cause* of those processes, and the source of the energy that makes them possible. So the Self is the unchanging, enduring reality; a stable centre of life on its own level, which has functions but *is not a function*.

The key thought is in the Gita: “Having pervaded with one part of myself the whole universe, I remain”. What “remains” is *the Self on its own level*. Yet while it remains there, it can pervade and is pervading the whole universe of the personality, and this it does *through* the superconscious.

We can get a feeling for this apparent paradox if we consider the analogy of the electric power system in our large cities. At the source – the generator, situated in a remote location – there is electricity of a certain *intensity*, or voltage. This electricity *pervades* the whole amazingly complex and intricate power network of the city, and is suitably stepped down in voltage along the way by means of

transformers, but the intensity (voltage) at the source *remains* stable and unchanging. And an unchanging –voltage is found also at all power outlets in every home. Yet the current, the *stream* of electric energy, which flows along the wires to energize a multitude of machines, appliances, light sources, etc. constitutes *a vast and continually changing process* which pervades and animates the city.

In this same way the Self is unchanging in essence, yet it sends out its energies, which are stepped down in intensity and transmitted through the Superconscious, and received, absorbed and utilized by the personality. It is interesting to note that the German philosopher Herman Keyserling talks about intensity as the specific characteristic of the Self. And Jung says that archetypes and symbols (which are important elements of the superconscious) are transmitters and transformers of energies.

From another point of view, it is as if the Self were the sun. The sun does not move relative to the earth. It is at the centre of the solar system, and remains there. But it pervades the whole solar system with its radiance, and at the same time sustains it and holds it together through its attractive force.

So the pure experience of the Self – of contact and eventually of identification with the Self – is very different from superconscious experiences or expanded states of awareness. We can begin to grasp this difference through a basic and most important analogy: *The Self is to the superconscious as the “I”, or personal self, is to the elements and functions of the personality*, with the difference that the “I” is often identified with the personality elements, while the Self is not identified with the superconscious.

The experience of the Self might be reached in the measure in which the “I” – which is a projection or emanation of the Self – ascends toward the Self, identifies with it, and is temporarily absorbed into it.

So the first step toward the experience of the Self is to achieve the experience of the “I”. The “I” is the personal centre of awareness and will. It is the *observer* and the *director*, and is distinct from the *contents* of consciousness. To reach it, one must first disidentify from feelings, thoughts, desires, drives, sensations, impulses – from the myriad contents of the personal consciousness. In other words one must relinquish the mistaken sense of *being* any of them. This of course does not mean in any way to abandon or suppress any of the personality functions. On the contrary, rather than being identified with, and therefore following, one or a few of them at a time, according to their whim, one can now direct and regulate them *at will*, and utilize any or all of them, at any moment, as means of expression in the world.

Achieving this condition of identification with the “I” and of inner mastery and

harmony is a major aim of personal psychosynthesis.

In the measure in which the “I” succeeds in releasing itself from those mistaken identifications at the personal level, it becomes able to ascent, through the superconscious or transpersonal realm, toward the Self. During this process there can be an increased intensity of the sense of identity; of self-awareness, due to the closer proximity of the Self, *as well* as the awareness and experience of the superconscious processes.

One of these two experiences will be prevalent, depending on the psychological type. For example, using the septenary classification mentioned in *The Act of Will*, the experience of the superconscious will be generally prevalent in the “love/illuminative” type and the “aesthetic/ creative” type, while the increased sense of identity is likely to be the most salient in the “Will/power” type, the “scientific/rational” type, and to some extent, in the “active/practical” type.

This is a basic; one could say “constitutional” difference. But the relative prominence of the two experiences can also change in the same individual at different times depending on a number of factors, for example the particular stage of development, or as a result of deliberate activity undertaken for that purpose, such as specific meditation exercises.

If the experience of the superconscious is stronger than the sense of self-identity there can be identification of the “I” with the contents of the superconscious, just as on a previous turn of the spiral there was identification with the contents of the personal consciousness.

This identification with higher and higher aspects of the superconscious is useful, as it can constitute a ladder toward the Self, and thus it represents; for many people, the path of least resistance and the most appropriate path.

But to have a true experience, even a beginning one, of the Self, it is necessary to disidentify *also from the superconscious*. And that is very difficult, for transpersonal states of awareness are so joyous, so alluring that one may become attached to them and enmeshed in them. Maslow has called this “higher side-tracking”. These peak experiences are beautiful and often “ecstatic”, and if properly understood and assimilated can be of real value, but they are not the pure experience of the Self.

It is interesting to observe that the danger of over-attachment to the superconscious has been recognized more or less explicitly by many spiritual teachers of the past. In order to avoid the danger of “higher side-tracking”, a number of approaches to spiritual development has been adopted on the strategy of completely and deliberately turning away from the superconscious. In the language of the Christian mystics where the “soul” is the emotional aspect of the personality, “God” is the Transpersonal Self and the “Visions” relate to the

superconscious, the emphasis against visions is well known. Similar attitudes exist in the East, for example in many forms of Zen Buddhism.

This attitude may well have been the most appropriate one in the past, where little psychological knowledge was available and much confusion existed concerning the higher realms of man. But it does not utilize the convenient bridge to the Self which the superconscious offers, and thus results in an unnecessarily difficult, “austere” path, which only few are able to follow to the end. And as we have seen, the Self needs the superconscious as its vehicle of expression, just as the “I” needs the personality as its instrument in the world. So if the superconscious is consistently neglected in the ascent toward the Self, later on time and effort will have to be spent in exploring and developing it. And when the superconscious is not sufficiently developed, an intense experience of the Self can produce ego inflation and disorientation. On the other hand if the opposite extreme is followed, of drifting into the superconscious without having developed an adequate sense of self-identity, one runs the risk of getting lost in it, and eventually regressing to the level of undifferentiated “mass consciousness”.

These two extreme conditions will be considered again later on. Here I would like to stress the validity of a basic principle of psychosynthesis, that “we can benefit from, and utilize every function and element of our psyche, *provided we understand its nature and purpose, and place it in its right relation with the greater whole.*”

So provided we have an adequate- roadmap and are aware of the pitfalls we can find along the way, then a balanced emphasis on the development of self-identity and on the awareness of superconscious processes will lead to our most harmonious, joyful, and effective development in the transpersonal realm. As we have said earlier, one or the other will normally be prevalent, depending on a number of factors; the point is to avoid a condition of excessive one-sidedness. This is often produced unwittingly by keeping our interest focussed on the side that is most developed – and therefore richer and most interesting – thus developing it even further. But we can also “feed” the least developed aspect, by deliberately focusing on it the energy of our interest and our attention.

In practice this is often easier to do for the superconscious than for the Self. Because of the transcendent nature of the Self; which is quite beyond our normal range of experience – and therefore beyond the power of our imagination – we often form our concept of what the Self is like on the basis of superconscious experiences. Such a concept is necessarily erroneous and distorted. And later on it often happens that we will believe to be in touch with the Self while we are actually still experiencing some of the higher aspects of the superconscious.

Some indications can be given to avoid this confusion, but we must keep in

mind that it is quite impossible to describe the experience of the Self in more than the most peripheral fashion. In the attempt to indicate what is ineffable, beyond words, various terms have been used: Atman, Tao (in its transcendent sense), The Void, Suchness, the Immovable Mover, The Omega Point.

The experience of the Self has a quality of perfect peace, serenity, calm stillness, purity, and in it there is the paradoxical blending of individuality and universality.

The Self experiences universality but without “losing” itself within the vast Universal Self. It remains at the centre, immovable. One way we can begin to realize this is by opening ourselves to the experience of *infinity*. For we can have the awareness of infinity, the perception of infinite space, without losing our sense of individuality. That is, it is the conscious “I” who has the perception and the experience of infinity. Infinity IS ... and man gropes to a feeble but increasingly profound realization of its existence. The same can be said concerning *eternity*. And the experiences of eternity and of infinity – of transcending the limitations of time and space – combined, lead to their synthesis, the experience of *universality*.

So the Self gradually extends its awareness and identification “upward”, into the vast realm of the Universal Self, yet remains fixed, aware of itself. The fundamental point is *that identification with the universal does not mean loss of identity, rather its enhancement and intensification*. This has been clearly stated by Radhakrishnan:

“The peculiar privilege of the human self is that he can consciously join and work for the whole and embody in his own life the purpose of the whole ... The two elements of selfhood: uniqueness (each-ness), and universality (all-ness), grow together until at last the most unique becomes the most universal”.

In the East this is represented by the symbol of a lotus with a radiant jewel at the centre. The petals of the lotus represent whirlpools, or vortexes of energies of various quality, and as these vortexes develop, interact, and become highly organized, they symbolize the opening of the lotus. They correspond to the transpersonal, superconscious functions and processes. Instead the radiant jewel at the centre represents the hub, the hinge, the Self ... a spark of universality, the unmoved mover. Here we find again all processes sustained, and in a sense included, in an immutable reality. This is expressed in the Eastern formula “Om Mane Padme Hum!”, “Hail, the jewel in the lotus!”

The fact that all processes can be contained in an immutable, central core is another aspect of the paradoxical nature of the Self. Yet this has been realized experientially by many people. Here is one such account, reported with unusual clarity and detail at the culminating point of an inner exploration using a guided

mental imagery technique:

“ It’s like a loop of white light It’s very bright without glaring ... you can look directly at it. .. It’s beautiful. (Guide: Let it slowly come nearer ... let it become one with you). Yes. Yes, I have. That’s what I am! I can see it very much clearer now. It’s spinning very, very fast ... that’s a very important thing to me ... it revolves around a point of white in the centre ... absolutely white ... and I can go into the white dot, and if I do, it goes out, and it’s like free faring through the universe. I can go anywhere, the stars are all inside the white dot, everything is inside the white dot.

It’s hard to keep myself from going through it. (Guide: O. K. Go ahead...). I’m through. There I am, just shooting around and seeing, just space. The earth is there ... I’m conscious of it, all of it. All of this is inside me, as well as outside me. It’s the same thing ... (long pause) ... I’m very at home ... there’s nothing to say”.

It is important to point out that although this subject was quite advanced, at the time of this experience he was quite naive concerning the superconscious and had not yet been exposed in any way to the concept of the Self. Yet we can easily recognize the fast spinning loop of light as a symbol of the superconscious, and the central point as a symbol of the Self. As the experience progresses, first there is identification with the superconscious (note that it had already occurred spontaneously when the guide suggested it) and this in turn leads to the awareness of the Self, then contact with it, and the consequent simultaneous experience of individuality and universality.

I intentionally said *contact* rather than *identification* with the Self. Throughout this experience, the emphasis was on processes, movements, and forms. The “point of white in the centre”, although having no specific form or colour, was still an image. And the experience was of *going through* it. So this is not to be considered as a pure experience of the Self, rather as a superconscious experience which culminated in a momentary contact with the Self, and a glimpse – not in any way the full experience – of the synthesis of individuality and universality.

As I have said, many who have had even intense transpersonal experiences – experiences full of beautiful and ecstatic feelings, of light, of insight – believe that they have made contact with the Self, while in fact they only experienced the superconscious levels of awareness. In reaching toward the Self it is important to know how to recognize this difference. Anything that has movement, change, activity, direction, boundaries, dimensions, restrictions, limits, or specific qualities of any kind, in other words anything that is less than eternal and infinite that seen from our normal point of view, *contains or implies*

any kind of differentiation, is not the Self!

The reader may object at this point that I have not yet said what the Self is truly like. But the transcendent nature of the Self places it beyond the power of understanding of the concrete mind, and consequently beyond the possibility of describing it with words. The only recourse is to describe what the Self is not. This approach has been very popular in the East, where it is called “the way of negation”. Its purpose is not so much to convey information about the Self as to gradually elevate the thinking processes beyond the level of dualities and of concrete thought. In the West this has been habitually misunderstood. Often, when we hear that the Self is changeless, we imagine it to be static; if it has no activity, we conclude that it must be passive; if it has no boundaries, it must be shapeless; if it has no qualities, it must be boring. So if it truly were to contain the whole universe, that universe could only be trivial and repugnant.

Again, we have attempted to understand the Self in terms of our normal experiences, and arrived at a concept which has no relation whatsoever with the true nature of the Self. The “way of negation” needs to be reinterpreted in its true sense. When we say that anything that has quality is not the Self, we mean anything that has specific quality. The Self has no quality yet at the same time it is the synthesis of all qualities, in the sense that all qualities are contained in it and harmoniously integrated. Both darkness and white light can be said to have no colour, yet white light contains all colours, and the right proportions. And the radiation of the Self can be experienced as blackness or as pure intense white light at different times. This has been reported by many mystics, the most famous of all being St. John of the Cross who used the term “Dark Night of the Soul” to describe the state that *precedes*, and leads to the experience of the Self. Other mystics have talked about the cosmic “voice of the silence” or “music of the spheres” which can be heard when all normal sounds cease, yet contains all sounds. And the experience of

The Void – the transcendence of bounded space and of all that is contained in space – has been described as terrifying or blissful in different circumstances. This paradoxical nature of the Self is perhaps best stated by the Buddhist formula: “Neither being, nor not-being, nor both being and not-being, nor neither being nor not-being”!

So we need to remember that any concept or picture of the experience of the Self that we may have before the actual experience, is likely to lead us astray if we take it as face value. What is important is not to try to understand beforehand what the experience will be like, but to actually *have* that experience, by first identifying with the “I”, and then as the “I”, by ascending toward the Self and becoming unified with it. To do so we need on one hand to recognize those aspects which are not the Self, thus becoming able to disidentify from them once

they hold us back. On the other hand we can increasingly cultivate and develop the sense of self-identity – as the path which leads to the Self – at the same time while opening ourselves to, and realizing as much as possible, the sense of eternity, infinity, and universality, as the aspects which help us proceed along that path.

I said before that the experience of the Self has a quality of perfect peace, calm, serenity, etc., but these are not qualities in the normal sense, they are rather states that indicate synthesis, wholeness, unity.

So the Self is in reality both the perfect, immutable, inexhaustible source, and the universal, all-encompassing point of convergence, of ultimate fulfilment. It is only in the identification with the Self that we can permanently overcome the innate sense of separateness and aloneness that we have almost come to accept as an inescapable aspect of being human.

To use Maslow's words:

“... this is a special phenomenological state in which the person somehow perceives the whole cosmos or at least the unity and integration of it and of everything in it, including his Self. He then feels as if he belongs by right in the cosmos. He becomes one of the family rather than an orphan. He comes inside rather than being outside looking in. He feels simultaneously small because of the vastness of the universe, but also an important being because he is there in it by absolute right. He is part of the universe rather than a stranger to it or an intruder in it”.

Identification with the Self gives freedom from all limitations and restrictions of the personal life, and – provided the superconscious is adequately developed – freedom to act in the world at will and as a free agent, according to the perceived need, to transpersonal purpose, and for the greatest good of all.

But this very high state is not in any way an ultimate one. It is the culmination of a cycle which leads to the beginning of a new one, just like the seed which germinates in the dark, pushes its way through the soil with great struggle, and emerges in the freedom of a new existence in the light and open space. Similarly by achieving identification with the Self, and the consciousness of universality, we find our rightful place in the greater whole, and in so doing enter a new cycle, that which Eastern sages have called “The Way of Higher Evolution”.

We said that in order to have the pure experience of the Transpersonal Self one has to disidentify from that which is not the Self; and that to be able to do so, one has first to have the experience of the personal self – the “I”.

For this the will has to be used: *first* to acquire the awareness of the personal “I”, to identify with it, and *second* to reach up from it toward the Self. At the same

time the Self, by means of the Transpersonal Will, attracts and reabsorbs the personal “I” which it emanated. This indicates the coordinated action of the personal will and the Transpersonal Will.

As we can see in the diagram, fig. A, the “I” is intimately related to the Transpersonal Self. More precisely, the “I” is a projection or reflection of the Self an *outpost* of the Self in the world of the personality. It is important to realize this, because the attempt to reach the Self by skipping the “I” is an error, due to a misunderstanding. Many, with the best intentions, and at the cost of great pain, try to “destroy” the personal “I”, the ego. Here we find an important difference between psychosynthesis and various other methods.

In psychosynthesis we maintain *that nothing has to be condemned, or destroyed, or eliminated*. As I said before, “we can benefit from and utilize every function and element of our psyche, provided we understand its nature and purpose, and place in it its right relation with the greater whole”

So the “I” is not to be destroyed. Personal self-identity is precious, It is the result of a long period of evolution, and cannot be thrown away. What we have to eliminate is our attachment to it, because the personal self has to be brought back to its source! And, as we have said, this is done through the coordination and alignment of the personal will with the Transpersonal Will, which leads to the reunification of the personal self with the Transpersonal Self.

A clear understanding of this process will show that attempts to “kill the ego” not only will not help achieve this reunification, but actually lead in the opposite direction. This is clearly stated by Lama Angarika Govinda:

“Individuality is not only the necessary and complementary opposite of universality, but the focal point through which alone universality can be experienced. The suppression of individuality, the philosophical or religious denial of its value or importance, can only lead to a state of complete indifference and dissolution, which may be a liberation from suffering but a purely negative one, as it deprives us of the highest experience towards which the process of individuation seems to aim: the experience of perfect enlightenment, of Buddhahood in which the universality of our true being is realized. Merely to ‘merge into the whole’ like the ‘drop into the sea’, without having realized that wholeness, is only a poetical way of accepting annihilation and evading the problem that the fact of our individuality poses. Why should the universe evolve individualized forms of life and consciousness if this were not consistent with or inherent in the very spirit or nature of the universe”.

For the “I” to freely align its will with the Will of the Transpersonal Self is a most difficult task and a culminating act, *which only a strong “I” with a fully*

developed will is capable of achieving, and for which all previous acts of will in the world of the personality can be considered, in a sense, as preparation and training.

So the unification of the “I” with the Self becomes possible only once the sense of the “I”, of personal identity, has reached a sufficient intensity – and the personal will a corresponding strength – that it can freely and deliberately disidentify from the personality functions and elevate itself sufficiently to elicit a corresponding attractive action by the Self.

The reader may rightly object at this point that some people have reported undoubtedly genuine experiences of the Self which occurred more or less unexpectedly, without any conscious effort of the individual. In this case it is the Transpersonal Self that initiates the process. The issue of who initiates and who responds can be misleading. Here I talk from the point of view of experience at the level of the personality, which is necessarily limited and partial. From the view point of the Self – a viewpoint which is not limited by time and space, and is therefore much more true to reality – the reaching of the “I” for the Self, and the attraction of the “I” by the Self, are two aspects of one and the same rhythmic process, and therefore cannot be considered separately, rather they can be said to occur simultaneously.

Such true spontaneous experiences of the Self are extremely rare, and by their very nature, quite unpredictable. So the fact that they do occur is of profound psychological interest, but of little practical help for the person who is searching for an approach and a path he can follow for his own development in the transpersonal realm.

Furthermore such spontaneous experiences are usually of short duration, although their effects can be quite dramatic and beneficial. They typically leave the person with a most intense yearning to “go back”, to return to that state of consciousness. One is then likely to begin an active search for the “way back”.

This phase is a crucial – and often a very painful one. It is perhaps during this period that one is most likely to get side-tracked, and to find himself repeatedly at a dead end. Spontaneous experiences are likely to occur with little or no effort, while the person is engaged in totally unrelated activities. But often one will assume unconsciously that it is this unrelated behaviour that caused the experience, and later in the attempt to replicate such experience, one may try to “figure out what he did” that made it happen, and as a result waste much time and go to dangerous extremes, attempting to reproduce the conditions in which the experience occurred. Or remembering the state of peace, of serenity, of being, which he may have realized at the high point of the experience, he may decide to reduce to a minimum, or suspend, all personality activities, considering them a disturbing element, and antithetical to the state he is trying to

reach. Such attempts are increasingly common today, and are the distortion of an attitude which is valid and appropriate *at its own level*.

This right attitude can perhaps be best illustrated by Wagner's symbolic epic of the Grail. Titurel, the knight, ascends the mountain, with much labour and courage. Then, after having reached the top, spends the night in prayer, asking for inspiration, and waits in silence. In response to this prayer, a host of angels (symbol of the superconscious) appear, and bring him the Cup (the Grail, symbol of transpersonal Love) and the Sword (symbol of Spiritual Power and Will). We see here first the *active* phase, and then the *receptive* phase. This sequence is essential. The knight who leaves the world behind him and ascends the mountain with much labour is the symbol of the "I" as it first dis-identifies from all personality functions and aspects, and then, with an act of will, ascends as close as it can toward the Self. At the summit a receptive, contemplative attitude is taken, through the techniques of *meditation, contemplation, and silence*. And this, if executed correctly, can lead to the inflow of the superconscious (which transmits to the personality the needed transpersonal qualities) and later to contact with the Self. So we must *first* "reach the top", *then* assume the proper inner attitude, becoming silent at all levels of the personality, but from a focussed point of tension oriented upward.

A common error is to try to suspend all activity before having reached the top, or even before having started to climb. This can make us open to undesirable or dangerous influences, and in any case is a state of passivity that leads to stagnation. The opposite error is to keep trying to climb, or to forget to turn the attention upward, after having reached the mountain top. Then the "noise" of our physical, emotional, and mental activity prevents us from hearing, and tuning ourselves to, the more subtle "sounds" of the transpersonal realms.

Again, neither *activity* nor *receptivity* is to be rejected. Both are useful, even necessary, provided we understand their function and use each at the appropriate time and place.

I said that the "I" is a projection, an outpost of the Self. And there is a permanent connection between the two, through which energy can flow. When a good measure of genuine personal self-awareness is reached, then there are streams of energy which flow from the Transpersonal Self to the "I". This, again, is different from the energy which comes from the superconscious levels, for they bring no specific contents or intuitions.

They are intimations from the Transpersonal Self and *are experienced as intensification of self-awareness*. So this experience gives an acute sense of self-awareness accompanied by a sense of bliss. *Sat Chit Ananda*. "Thou are that".

For the Transpersonal Self *is* reality; it is of the same nature as the Universal

Reality. Therefore its energy is charged with power and bliss, without any definite content. For this reason the ultimate reality to which it belongs has been described in terms of *purity*. This is the absence of specific quality, which is arrived at through the harmonious synthesis of *all* qualities (just as white light, the absence of colour, is the combination in right proportions of all colours). It is the void in a positive sense, the “Suchness of the Void”, a void which contains all life, to which everything belongs, and in which all is combined.

This is the true contact with the Self. All the rest is contact with the superconscious.

The Self is without dimensions; it is both a geometric point that occupies no space; it is both zero and infinity, the “Laya Point”, Aristotle’s “Unmoved Mover”. And it radiates beams of energy, emanates an energy field. An aspect of this energy reaches the superconscious. Another reaches the “I”. The relationship between the Self and the “I” is a direct one, in which the Superconscious is not involved. One must learn to pass through the realm of the superconscious without looking right or left, so to speak, and that is very difficult, because it is so enticing, and understandably so. But one must remember that its charm can constitute the “Higher Side-tracking’s” of which Maslow talks about. .

On the other hand the superconscious is of utmost importance in our development, and its vital place needs to be appreciated and understood, because parallel to the increasing intensity of the realization of self-consciousness – which can be considered an ascent, or progress along a vertical dimension – there needs to be *experience*, *expansion*, and *expression* at all levels, along the horizontal dimension.

Even at the personality level we don’t, nor should we, live in the pure self-consciousness of the “I”. The “I” creates its personality. Personal psychosynthesis is just that – the creation of a fully harmonized and integrated personality by the “I”, the personal self. The “I” must be able to express itself at all personality levels, must use all the energies and functions without forced identification with any of them, being free to be either *fully dis-identified* or *partially identified* with anyone function or group of function, at any moment and *at will*, according to its own purpose. The personal self along the way of unfoldment and growth has to make use of its qualities, to express its power, its will, and to pervade the little universe of the personality while remaining at the centre.

In a similar way the Transpersonal Self on its own level must use the superconscious as its vehicle of experience and expression, as a means through which its energy is “transformed” or “stepped down” into a form that can be utilized by the personality. Such stepping down or transformations of energy are

quite common, in nature and in man-made devices alike. Electric transformers and the gear shift of automobiles and bicycles fulfil just such a function. In nature, when the powerful and lethal high energy radiation (gamma rays and x-rays) emitted by the Sun reaches the upper atmosphere of the Earth; it interacts with free electrons a process called Compton Effect – and is stepped down into the visible light and heat which is vital to the biological world.

This is the normal course of evolution, a course that leads to increasing health and wholeness. Just as highly developed superconscious process without commensurate development of the sense of self can be overpowering, and lead one to be “swept away”, and in extreme cases to regression into the mass consciousness, so a premature, inrush of energy directly from the Self, without the capacity to channel the energy into and through the superconscious can produce imbalance and disorientation, and in extreme cases even psychosis. The intensity is too high, and the means to understand and assimilate the experience in relation to everyday awareness, and act accordingly; are not available. The experience of the Self remains unconnected. This can cause a most painful sense of split, and of lack of understanding, or of lack of means of expression in the world – almost as being handicapped. In extreme cases there can be rejection of the everyday world as non-real. This is a basic experiential confusion: the world is real. What is non- real is our perception of it, as physicists have proved at the beginning of the century. They have shown that what we perceive as solid matter is really almost completely empty space, in which atoms – themselves whirlpools of energy – interact at distances proportional to the stars in our galaxy.

At the opposite pole, there can be a *confusion of levels* where after the experience one believes that he is still identified with the Self when he has actually “descended” once again to the level of the “I”. This can cause “ego inflation”, feelings of omnipotence, and in extreme cases the individual who, speaking from the personal self says “I am God”, thus ascribing to the “I” a spiritual nature that properly belongs to the Self.

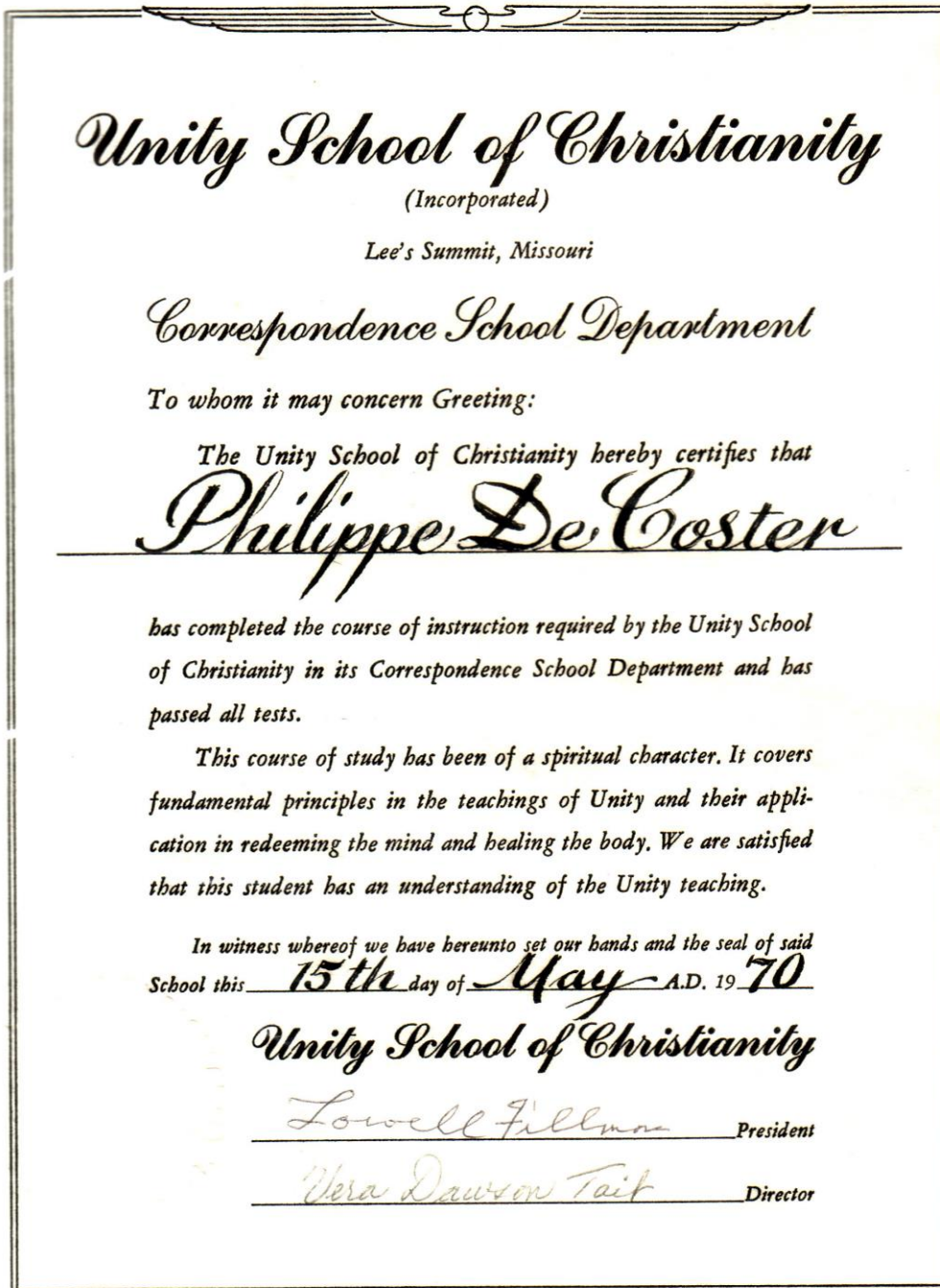
But when parallel to the reaching upward toward the Self, the superconscious functions and processes are also developed, and there is a safe; healthy, and immensely fruitful path through which the energy can flow. Then one can use compassion and wisdom, as well as strength, power and will: the strength and the power to express compassion according to wisdom; the wisdom and compassion to use power for the greatest good!

To Philippe,
Wishing you great
joy on your own
Silent Path & hope
you welcome to the
Group.
Michal

March 1971

Dedication of a book by Michal Eastcott to Philippe L De Coster

Here follows one of the author's certificates and diplomas:



The author's ability to teach "Affirmative Self-Talk; and, Meditation as taught

in psychosynthesis. ”

Contents

The human brain has been called...	2
Modern Psychology and Practical Meditation	5
How meditation affects the brain	6
Meditation belongs to psychology not Religion	8
Meditation in Modern Psychology	9
Application and objectives of practical meditation	10
Today and contemporary meditation research	10
Contextual approach to meditation	11
Practice – Category I – Nature – Perceptions about Meditation	13
Practice of Meditation	14
Process of Meditation	15
Category II – Influencing factors	15
Goals; Belief system; Faith or religious community	16
Personality traits	17
Facilitative factors; Disturbing factors	18
Category III – Effects of meditation	18
Some tips for daily practice of meditation	19
Twenty Scientific Reasons exclusively to start Meditating today	20
Science behind Meditation and How to do it; Meditation decreases beta waves	22
Meditation helps you to focus; Meditation decreases anxiety;	23
Meditation decreases your need for sleep; Meditation makes you more perceptive; Meditation makes your brain bigger; Meditation helps you to become more compassionate	
Meditation will help you to remember things; Meditation increases creativity; Meditation: How to do it	24
Brain Waves and Meditation; Constant brain waves; Relaxed attention with theta	26
Silent experiences with alpha; Different from sleep; nondirective versus concentration	27
Take home message	28
The Process of Meditation (Along the teaching of Dr. Roberto Assagioli, MD	28
Preparation; Relaxation	29
The Technique of Dis-identification	31
Concentration	38
Reflective Meditation	42

Technical Suggestions on Meditation	43
Receptive Meditation	45
Stages of Receptive Meditation; Silence	46
Methods of Reception	47
Inner Seeing; Inner Hearing	48
Inner Contact	49
Urge to Action; Registration; Delayed Reception	50
Visualisation	51
Along Dr. Roberto Assagioli	51
Exercise of the Blossoming of the Rose	55
A Meditation Outline as Example	56
Seed Thoughts for Meditation; Introduction	57
Three-hundred Seventy Seed Thoughts	60
There are two significant roads in life ...	74
Meditative Techniques in Psychotherapy	74
A Synthesis of Many Traditions; Stages in Psychosynthesis;	82
Psychosynthesis Methods	
Will and Free Choice; The “Egg” Diagram: Picturing Your Psyche	83
Glossary of Meditation Words and more for info	84
Sources and References	115
The Editor, Author and Researcher (overview)	119
Contents	137

© March 2017 – Satsang EBook Publications, Ghent, Belgium

(Non-commercial – Free download)

Copyright: Philippe L. De Coster